



# messing about in **BOATS**

**Special Features This Issue**  
"1554 Mile Run of *Br'er Fox II*"  
"Hidden Delights of California Delta"

Volume 23 - Number 1

May 15, 2005

## FROM CINCINNATI TO NEW ORLEANS

The 1554 MILE RUN of  
"BR'ER FOX II"



# messing about in BOATS

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## Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor



Volume 23, Number 1, beginning another year of publication, our 23rd, 528 issues now in the archives. The binders on the shelves over my computer desk march onwards, the main shelf became full up with the inclusion of the 1996 issue and so they spilled over onto the top of the adjacent filing cabinet until the 2000 issue, then started to stack up on their sides on the smaller upper shelf through 2002. 2003 and 2004 are yet to go into binders, they sit in a stack on that same upper shelf with now 2005 adding to them twice a month. While our volumes start each year with the May 15th issue due to that being the date of Volume 1 Number 1, here we are already five months into 2005! I have yet to decide where to go from here in this space crunch. I can fit in the rest of 2005 before space finally runs out, so, not to worry.

The archives for my former motorcycling magazines are on shelves in our former office upstairs in our barn. Twenty volumes of *Cycle Sport* (1959-78) and 14 volumes of *Trail Rider* (1970-83) are lined up for ready access, for I still get calls from former readers from those days of yore about back issues or copies of stories from them. They still can call me as my telephone number has not changed (except for area code manipulations by the phone company). The fact is that my telephone number still contains the roots of the number first issued to my parents here in 1937, it was a two party line then, "Danvers 906-R". The "906" lingers on today as "0906" attached to the (978) 774-.

While I'm on this topic of longevity in place (Jane and I have now owned the home I grew up in for 50 years) the mailbox into which your communications are placed daily by the mailman is the same one that was on a post out front back in 1937. It now is hung onto the nearby utility pole. It is made of some sort of 1/8" galvanized steel so tough it cannot be cut with a hacksaw. It has been repainted a couple of times. Even though it no longer meets USPS requirements, being a rectangular box with a lift up lid, we have not been directed to replace it. Our regular mailman has been delivering our mail for 33 years now and he's not going to blow the whistle.

This mailbox has survived a number of mailbox smashing episodes over the many years it has stood there when destructive minded youths drive down the street swinging aluminum baseball bats at all the flimsy aluminum and plastic mailboxes. These suburban terrorists have no idea what is in store for them when they swing at our mailbox. It stands unflinching and the bat rebounds off it transmitting painful shock to the assailant's

arm and shoulder. I wish I could have viewed the anguish this caused the bums.

Back to the archives. I keep the *Messing About in Boats* archives in my office for ready reference as I get many more calls for specific articles. This is all due to the inclusion of Dave Thibodeau's exhaustive index of all back issues from 1983 through 1998 on a website ([www.messingaboutinboats.com](http://www.messingaboutinboats.com)) that was setup for us a number of years ago by [www.by-the-sea.com](http://www.by-the-sea.com) as a sort of quid pro quo for access to articles from our back issues for use on that website. Since those viewing "our" website cannot reach me directly by email (thankfully) they must call or write. I have accommodated all requests, usually just as a favor for an odd article or two. Only when a lengthier list of articles are desired have I had to charge a bit for my time and trouble.

The drill involved is to take down the appropriate volume binder, open it up, leaf through to the issue number wanted, remove it from the binder, open it to the page(s) involved, paper clip them for location, and add it to the daily copying folder I lug to the nearby Staples. There I copy it, fold it, and place it into an envelope I have already addressed and stamped to drop off on my next stop at the post office. Back home I return the issue to its binder to complete the task. As long as is just a small part of the daily copying I absorb the "cost."

No, the back issues archives are not in a computer, it's only been since about 2002 that our production has evolved into an all electronic final format, something called a pdf file sent to the printer 300 miles away. So nobody, myself included, can simply access a computer for back issue articles. We keep one year back in the computer and don't contemplate more as we are not going to ever scan the entire 450 plus or minus issues never produced in electronic format. Nor am I going to bring the index up to date by going through the now 150 plus issues published since 1998, laboriously entering each article in its appropriate place. Dave Thibodeau was a retired reader who volunteered to do this for us (his idea, not mine) back in 1998 and it took him about a year.

I do attempt to provide copies of articles published since 1998 if the person has some idea of about when it was published, at least the year, preferably what part of the year, or even which issue. These requests almost all come from readers, unlike most of the requests that come from the website index. I am much more disposed to exercise some effort to accommodate someone who values the magazine enough to subscribe to it.

## In This Issue...

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## On the Cover...

This montage of illustrations is from a feature story in this issue from the May 25, 1909 issue of *Motorboat* magazine about the thrills of early motorboating. It ties in nicely with our ongoing Weston Farmer series "Halcyon Days". Those were great days for motorheads.



# Building Kayaks And Low-Seat Canoes at The Berkshire Boat Building School

By Hilary Russell

In the summer of 1998, while I was taking a course at the WoodenBoat School in Brooklin, Maine, I found myself wandering into the class next door where Bruce Lemon's students were building exquisite skin-on-frame baidarkas. Struck by the beauty of the construction, especially the joinery and the lashings, I wished that the good would not be hidden by the skin. It was then that I began to imagine a skin-on-frame low-seat canoe lashed together. Now, seven years later, my students have built more than 50 of these boats as well as several kayaks and umiaks.

Having taken my 14' solo canoe into many estuaries, coves, and bays along the Atlantic from Massachusetts to Maine; into the ponds, lakes, and rivers of the Adirondacks and Minnesota's Boundary Waters; and through local ponds and rivers here in the Berkshires, I am sold on the light weight and the durability of nylon skin over a lashed construction of white cedar ribs and spruce or red cedar stringers. Our 11' canoes weigh about 18 lbs., our 14' tandems 30 lbs., and our 14' kayak 35 lbs.

I'm also a passionate apologist for the low seat canoe, which is lighter than any kayak, paddles just as effortlessly, carries easily on one shoulder, is simple to throw on top of a car, and no problem to load up with gear. Although double paddles propel these canoes quickly and efficiently, I prefer the fun and simplicity of a single-bladed paddle, which I keep lashed with bungee cord to a couple of ribs (another advantage of skin-on-frame canoe construction).

Still taken with the beauty of lashed construction, I emphasize to my students the importance of a visual contrast between the skin and the frame. For instance, in our canoes we often use red cedar for the stringers and floor boards and mahogany for the decks, thwarts, backrest, and rubrails. We also find that exterior oil stain works well not only to protect the wood but also to create a contrast between the interior skin and the frame. The result is a featherweight boat that rivals the grace and beauty of a fine wood and canvas canoe.

Check out <[www.bsn.net/boatbuilding](http://www.bsn.net/boatbuilding)> for more information or contact Hilary Russell at P.O. Box 578, Sheffield, MA 01257 or at <[hrussell@berk-shireschool.org](mailto:hrussell@berk-shireschool.org)>

## 2005 Berkshire Boat Building School Classes

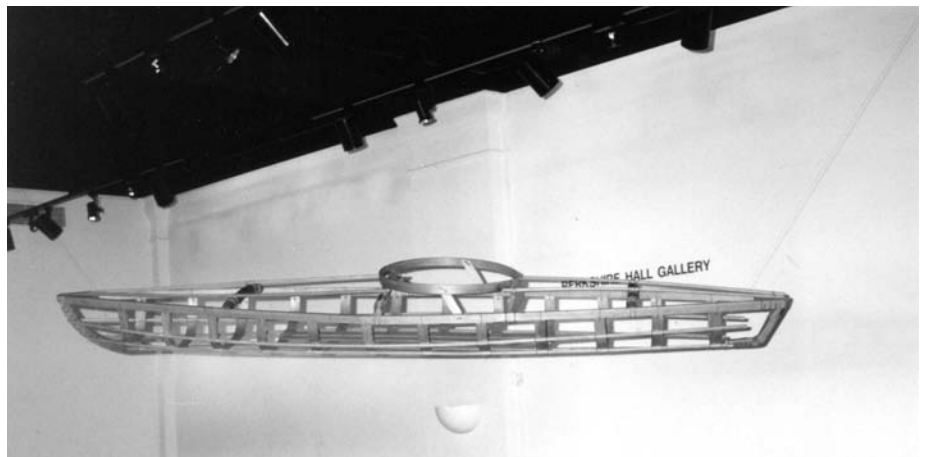
At the Berkshire School in Sheffield, Massachusetts: Canoe Classes: June 27-July 1 and July 18-22. Kayak Class: July 11-16.

At Lloyd Center in S. Dartmouth, Massachusetts: Canoe Class: August 1-6.

At St. Regis Canoe Outfitters in Saranac Lake, New York (tentative): Canoe Class: Sept. 12-16.



14' Greenland inspired kayak built by Henry Switlik and Jeremy Sowa.



8-1/2' decorative unskinned kayak built by Clayton Tolman and Louis Palazzo.

11' low seat canoe built by Shane Knapp (note the half ribs amidships which help resist a too-round bottom).



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# You write to us about...

## Activities & Events...

### Something New at the Mystic Small Craft Workshop

We expect to have at least a half dozen camper cruisers at this year's workshop on June 4-5. These versatile boats, usually under 20', shoal draft and trailerable, wind and human powered, sometimes helped by auxiliary power, have gathered considerable attention in the press recently. Among others, Andrew Kitchen will be bringing his 18' JII yawl, slightly shorter cousin to the Ian Oughtred designed Caledonia yawl. Owners of Sea Pearls, Mud Hens, Dovekies or their near sisters, traditional or not, are welcome. A possible cruise before or after the Small Craft Weekend is a possibility. For more information contact me at <peter.vermilya@mysticseaport.org>.

On Sunday morning the Watercraft Storage area will be open for Workshop participants. The star of the show this year is a 15' New York City built Whitehall acquired last fall. Built by Stephen Roberts in East Harlem over 125 years ago, it is the only known survivor of the thousands of Whitehalls which worked the city waters in the 19th century. It is in remarkable shape, essentially untouched in structure and finish. This rare gem of a boat will sing to your eye. There are also, of course, 420 other boats to be seen.

There is still time to register for the John Gardner Small Craft Workshop on June 4-5. Go to <http://www.mysticseaport.org>, <<http://www.mysticseaport.org/>>, or contact me directly at <peter.vermilya@mysticseaport.org>.

Peter Vermilya, Mystic Seaport Museum, Mystic, CT

### Wooden Boat Show & Summer Solstice Festival

With the early stirrings of spring the North House Folk School of Grand Marais, Minnesota, is moving fast towards our largest annual event of the year, the 8th Annual Wooden Boat Show & Summer Solstice Festival on June 17-19. The schedule promises many educational and inspiring events, including traditional craft workshops that celebrate our mission, nearly 75 unique handcrafted wooden watercraft on display throughout the weekend, an auction that welcomes boating and tool enthusiasts of all kinds, and special guest Becky Mason (Canada's First Lady of Wooden Canoes), who will host paddling clinics and present a featured exhibition of her art, "Canoe-scapes." In 2004 over 2,000 wooden boat enthusiasts spread out across our campus.

Those online can view all the details at <http://www.northhousefolkschool.com/events/woodenboatshow.html> For details by mail write North House Folk School, P.O. Box 759, Grand Marais, MN 55604-0759 or phone (218) 387-9762.

Scott Pollock, Program Director, North House Folk School, Grand Marais, MN

## Adventures & Experiences...

### Remembering Wes Farmer

I am delighted to see Weston Farmer's "Halcyon Days" in the magazine. Weston Farmer was my hero from when I was a boy. I don't know if I grew up to be like I am because of subscribing to *Science and Mechanics* or if I already had tendencies in that direction so that's why I read every word in there so eagerly, but Weston Farmer's writing and way of thinking about things was a big influence on me (can you tell?). Because of that, I was lucky enough to become friends with his son Matthew W. (Wes) Farmer and learned a lot about how it was growing up on old Gitche Gumee by the shining big seawater on Isle Royal with boats and engines and homemade airplanes and wonders of all sorts. Weston Farmer was his hero, too, and it stood him in good stead just like me.

Wes was the nicest kind of man. A letter from him was such an encouraging thing that I always stood on the sidewalk outside the post office and read it, because if I got in the car some of these impatient people would glare at me for occupying the parking space too long and distract me.

Once Wes sent me a photograph of the prototype of the Dolly Varden strip-planked skiff like the one I built from plans in *Science and Mechanics* a long time ago. You know you kind of think a remote hero is something sort of superhuman. Well, in the picture of the Dolly Varden prototype, the boat is sitting on two sawhorses in an unfinished state. There is a very cheerful looking woman standing behind it and... here is where the feet of clay connect this great man to me... she is standing in the knee deep weeds of a yard long overdue for mowing. The shop in the background is sort of unkempt, too.

It looks exactly like my outfit right this minute. We are about to finish a strip planked boat heavily influenced by the Dolly Varden. I intended to pose the boat in the same situation and take a picture to send to Wes. After all, I have access to a cheerful looking woman to go with the boat. Since I can't send that picture to Wes, I'll just have to send it to this magazine. I'll pose the shot as soon as we get the rails on there.

Robb White, Thomasville, GA

### HiLiner Boats Beautiful

In the April 1 issue there was a short article by Bunny Fernald in which he is pictured in one of his HiLiner outboards of many years ago. This article brought back great memories for me. To me, the HiLiner boats were the most beautiful outboard powered boats on the Congamond Lakes in south central Massachusetts

Our family took our one week summer vacations renting a cottage on Plum Island near Newbury, Massachusetts, not far from the lifeboat station also pictured in Bunny's article. Dad would always take us for a ride past where the HiLiners were built and we would stop and admire those beautiful HiLiner boats waiting for their new owners.

Henry Champagney, Greenback, TN

## Adventures & Experiences...

### A Correction

I greatly enjoy your magazine! I side with those who appreciate most all of what is in your magazine. Robb White is worth reading no matter what his subject. When I (rarely) question his point of view, I give him the benefit of the doubt.

The various serial stories about expeditions here and there are fascinating to me. I'll likely not get to 99% of the places mentioned, but the pleasure of exploring vicariously is great, too.

A note of correction. In a recent edition there was a good story about a trip on the Cayuga-Seneca Canal in upstate New York. I live on Cayuga Lake (west shore, about 15 miles south of the north end) and have been a "laker" for over 50 years. I've taken the trip described in that story many times, too, so I'll claim expertise. The article mentions going to the main line of the New York State Barge Canal and having a left-turn/right-turn choice, with the left reputed to take the boater to Seneca Lake.

A left turn at that junction will never get to Seneca Lake, instead it leads to Rochester and points west. To get from Cayuga Lake to Seneca Lake one must turn left (west) before the lock (called Mud Lock locally) at the north end of Cayuga Lake. The westbound canal goes through Seneca Falls and Waterloo before reaching Seneca Lake, where it dead ends at Watkins Glen.

My messing about is all in fairly small boats and involves fishing and puttering and just fooling around. My fleet is now all aluminum or plastic; while wood is great, I just don't have the time needed for the upkeep it deserves.

I try to take at least one end-to-end trip on Cayuga Lake every summer just to see what has changed. My work involves worldwide travel and I'll look for boats and water wherever I go if I have any free time. I've been lucky to do small boating in Europe (Adriatic and Holland) and Mexico and in many parts of the U.S., too.

I now think I should take a trip from Cayuga Lake to Seneca Lake, perhaps all the way to Watkins Glen even, and document that trip for your readers.

Charles T. Brady, Seneca Falls, NY

### Substitute for Firzite

The hands down simplest cheapest and most absorbent "boat juice" I've tried is just a 50/50 mix of turpentine and linseed oil. I must have seen that in some of Pete Culler's writing. He's full of "simple" solutions. Thanks for a great magazine. Don't change a thing.

Gary Jackson, Seattle, WA

### About Loons

I enjoyed Rob White's little article about loons in the February 15 issue, and now the March 1 issue has arrived and I still haven't gotten to write you about it. It's interesting to get his observations of our Minnesota State Bird while they are wintering elsewhere. Some of his observations don't seem to agree with what we've always heard about loons. To quote from a much shorter piece (aimed at young readers) in the current Minnesota DNR magazine:



"After their parents head to the Gulf Coast, young common loons stay another month to eat and grow before the long journey. The young loons live in southern waters for four or five years, until breeding age. Then, amazingly, they find their way back to the Minnesota lake where they were raised."

I've never been in the northern loon habitat country during either spring or fall migration times so I can't vouch for what I've only heard here and elsewhere, but it would be interesting to get some other southern observations. Loons typically raise only one, and sometimes two, young so a second arrival might just blend in. And maybe the young loons don't make their distinctive yodels and calls and thus don't stand out in the southern waters at their arrival and during the summer periods.

Let me put in a vote for Hugh Ware's periodic reports; our inland local media never covers the stuff that he does and I find it interesting. Also, hey, you didn't give me a byline for my review of *A Speck On The Sea* in the February 15 issue!

James Broten, St. Paul, MN

### About the "Guinea Stick"

Re: Preston Larus' "The Guinea Stick" in the April 1 issue, I observed this system in the late '70s on inboards built in Michigan's Cedarville/Hessel area (lots of islands with summer homes on them). These boats had been built in the '50s and '60s along lines that dated back to the early part of the 1900s. The builder I talked with said the system was "... fairly common and has been used around here for quite awhile." How long "quite awhile" was, I don't know.

I corresponded with John Gardner about his variations on the lines of the St. Pierre dories and this is one option he suggested. Whether the original St. Pierre's used this, I don't know.

While in Toronto Harbor in 1981, I saw a wooden inboard utility boat (about a 24-footer) with this system. As there was no one around to ask questions of, I've nothing but the visual recall.

My nephew and I had decided to use a tiller stick (our term for it) on a fishing skiff I hope to get built for him this summer. We'll let you know how it works out.

Rodger C. Swanson, Windsor, CT

### Still More About the "Guinea Stick"

Preston Larus' account of the use of the Guinea Stick in the April 1 issue made fascinating reading. I'm thinking about installing a similar device in one of my own boats this summer.

Did I come up with the idea on my own? I wish! No, it came from one of Richard Bissell's books. In it there is a photo showing a steering stick in a Mississippi river skiff similar in design and function to the Guinea Stick, except that in Bissell's skiff the stick is mounted so as to be moved athwartship to swing the rudder.

Bissell was a young river rat, later a towboat deckhand, a towboat pilot, and finally an author and playwright. He's probably best known for the novel and play *Seven and a Half Cents*, *Pajama Game*, the play *Say, Darling* and *My Life On the Mississippi Or Why I Am Not Mark Twain*. The latter is his autobiography and is well worth a read if you can find it.

John Owen Mason, Cortez, FL

### Would Like to Share

I came across a few articles from *Fur-Fish-Game* magazine that I would like to share with readers of *MAIB*. They are "Big River Blue Cats," "Catch of a Lifetime," "Small Mouth Buffalo," and "Cajun Country Alligator Line." I thought readers like myself who enjoy Robb White's articles might enjoy them. I will soon be a catfish fisherman at the new age of 64 in October and hope to do a lot more messing about in boats.

Bob Simon, State Farm, VA

**Editor Comments:** I published Bob's letter so I could make the following points: I cannot reprint articles from other publications without permission to do so. In rare cases I take the trouble (and it is trouble) to request reprint permission, but not often. As to fishing, if it is supplementary to the boating I do not object to its inclusion, but if it is the main theme it is not for me.

### Information Wanted...

#### Camp Cruiser for Circumnavigation

I hope some day to do a long distance circumnavigation of the eastern U.S. via the Intracoastal Waterway, Hudson River, Lake Champlain, St. Lawrence Seaway, Great Lakes, Illinois River and Mississippi River. I once did this in a 35' Peterson with a flying bridge when I was 14 years old.

Now I would like to buy or build a camp cruiser, not too big, trailerable, sailable but not required, able to sleep two to three people. Suggestions are welcome.

Ted Fiust, 42 Mathews Dr., Wayland, MA 01778-4422

### Opinions...

#### Minimize the Mystique

I really enjoyed the March 15 issue even without any Mississippi Bob stuff. Jonathan Davol's book review on Jim Michalak's book caught my eye as I had just read this book myself. Jonathan gave Jim a lot of credit for the book but I think that he missed one very vital point.

There are a lot of boatbuilding books out there, and one wooden boat magazine, that promote the mystique of boatbuilding. I was really impressed with Jim's attitude about building. You saw the boards, wire them together, and glass the seams. No mystique, just a finished boat. There are a lot of folks out there that dream of boatbuilding or maybe even start one. Having a finished boat has nothing to do with the project. The process is what it is all about. Bringing the photos to work to share with co-workers is what it's all about.

I have been reading boatbuilding books since *Popular Mechanics* published *Twenty Boats You Can Build*. I grew up in a time when if you wanted a toy you built it. Boats are just big toys. I was glad to read a book that minimizes the mystique.

Best article in this issue I thought was Gaylord Lockett's "How I Built a Boat." No mystique, he wanted a boat and figured out a way to have the boat he wanted. What he did made a lot of sense to me.

Doc Regan's articles I always find enjoyable but he did come down pretty hard on my home state. Really, Doc, the ice is almost all out by the first of June and we stay ice-free until September. If you must find fault with Minnesota you might mention our State Bird.

Mississippi Bob Brown, Apple Valley, MN



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# The Making of Tom Cat

A Fathom Wide

By Two-Plus Fathoms Long

By William Garden

WoodenBoat Publications, Inc., 2004

51 pages, \$17.95

ISBN 0-937822-78-7

Reviewed by Roy L. Terwilliger

This is an interesting little book, I say "little" because it only has 51 pages, but because of the content and the 8-1/2" x 11" format it contains a great deal of information. It is hard to classify because it has so many facets, including boat design, boat building, storybook, sketchbook, plans book, photo gallery, and sailing manual. Author Bill Garden, world renowned boat designer and in his 80s, still acts like a kid when describing the fun he had with *Tom Cat*. Evidence of Mr. Garden's extensive boat design experience is indicated in the photo on page 45 of the book which shows *Tom Cat* sailing alongside a 164' megayacht, also a Garden design.

*Tom Cat* is a Beetle Cat-like boat but, as Bill says in the book, "*Tom's* displacement and interior volume are about one-and-one-half times that of a Beetle." The story starts when Mr. Garden sees his neighbor sailing a small dinghy near his home, Toad's Landing, on an island on the coast of British Columbia (Toad's Landing is described in *WoodenBoat* #60). Mr. Garden decides he wants a small boat to sail also and, after much thought, finally settles on a small catboat like the Beetle Cat. Not able to find one on the West Coast, he and his neighbor ask Maynard Bray to find one back east. Two boats are located and trucked west with a larger boat. One of the delightful parts of the book is when Mr. Garden turns these boats into "Beetle Girls" and they take on a life of their own. One of them even writes a letter home to her East Coast relatives. Mr. Garden says that "boats built of wood maintain a communication beyond most folks hearing or understanding."

Mr. Garden then proceeds to design and build *Tom Cat* from the ground up. Every detail of the boat is described in the book, including many sketches of equipment and accessories and, of course, accurate scaled drawings. Sidebar notes in the chapter on building the boat include: "Planking Widths Using the Boston Scale," "Building Form Setup," "Wooden Cleats," "Boom Tent," and a "Curved Transom Option." The details in the sketches, such as for the wooden cleats, are wonderful.

Being primarily a designer, Mr. Garden has not forgotten the technical details. In the chapter on "Building Hints" there is a sidebar on designing spars with all the appropriate ratios and formulas. Later on in the book he compares the technical performance numbers of *Tom Cat* with the original Beetle Cat. His ultimate comparison, however, is on the last page of the book, just below a picture of a smiling Bill Garden in *Tom Cat*, where it says, "As we sail along with the Beetlers sitting down there on the floorboards, we find that our *Tom Cat*, with its sheltering freeboard, old-money varnish, comfortable foam seat cushions, and padded backrests has the



## Book Reviews

pleasant aura of a golden age, lacking only the forbidden cigar of yesteryear. For the young and limber, however, the Beetle's simplicity and easy upkeep would tip the scales Beetle-wise."

Above all the book is fun. As I've mentioned before, there are sketches throughout the book by Mr. Garden. Some of them are serious and detailed and others are informal and whimsical. The people figures in the sketches are usually smiling, but there is one who seems to be sailing in a breeze of wind and his face is green. This is a great book for an evening's read and I guarantee you will go back to it more than once.

## The Rower's Almanac 20004-2005

The Official Guidebook  
To Rowing Around the World  
Published by The Rower's Almanac, Inc.  
2004

Reviewed by John W. Robinson

To someone looking for a compilation of information about rowing, especially the competitive, sliding-seat type, this 500-page volume will fit the bill. Competitive rowing federations from 25 different countries contributed to the *Almanac* as well as 28 individuals. The publisher, Karen Solem, has put together an extremely informative book.

With sections such as "Travel and Adventure," "Country Profiles and World Clubs," "Buyer's Guidem" and "Business Listings," much ground is covered here.

The "Travel and Adventure" section contains articles about open water rowing in places such as Maine, San Francisco, Puget Sound, Florida, and Montana. Further information is found in a detailed article about rowing in eight large U.S. cities where the sport is especially accessible and popular, such as Philadelphia, Washington D.C., Boston, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

In keeping with the theme of presenting a wide array of information, there is even a 12-page section on "Rower Friendly Dining." Restaurants throughout the U.S. in active rowing cities are described and recommended. What makes a restaurant particularly "rower-friendly," as opposed to being attractive to any active person, is not clear to me. However, my interest is piqued and I would like to visit many of the restaurants so enthusiastically described.

Following "Travel and Adventure" is a 24-page section which lists the Olympic rowing results from 1900 to 2000. Being the highly revered Olympic sport that it is, this section will be of interest to anyone intrigued by the history of competitive rowing. Particular events, countries, and oarsmen's (or oarswomen's) names are listed.

The bulk of *The Rower's Almanac*, 340 pages, is a compilation of detailed information about world rowing clubs. Several thousand clubs are listed, including over 1,000 in the United States alone. Clubs from an astonishing 115 countries are covered. Clubs from countries such as the U.K., Germany, and Italy are represented as are also more exotic places such as Bukina Faso, Vietnam, Macedonia, and Uganda. The wealth of information about international rowing includes history, mailing and e-mail addresses, websites, and names of contact persons. Most world clubs welcome visiting oarspeople, and details of such are found in this section of the *Almanac*.

The *Almanac* includes a relatively brief, 12-page "Buyer's Guide" which lists and describes Rowing Schools and Camps, Racing Boats, and Recreational and Open Water Boats. This seems to be a collection of uniform-sized "advertisements" from the various companies. It is well laid-out and very informative.

Following the "Buyer's Guide" is a "Business Listing" section which includes well-organized listings of many rowing-related businesses. Thirteen categories are represented in this section. They include the expected businesses such as Boats and Oars, but also Health and Nutrition, Docks and Floats, and Media, Publications, and Software.

Studying this volume has rekindled a dormant passion for rowing in this reviewer and brought back some happy memories. I learned to row a single scull during my college years 20 years ago and I restored an old one which I acquired from a member of the Potomac Boat Club in Washington D.C. I met many fine people through my exposure to rowing, and to become acquainted with the very aesthetic discipline of sliding-seat rowing was a joy. With the help of *The Rower's Almanac* I am looking forward to becoming involved with the sport again.

## Kayak Design At Kayak Way

165 Minutes DVD

By Skip Snaith

Walrose and Hyde

P.O. Box 992, Eastsound, WA 98245

Reviewed by Hilary Russell

Skip Snaith packs this DVD with beautiful, detailed images of native kayaks, a good deal of technical information, great paddling and rolling shots, and his irrepressible love of kayaks and the cultures that have developed them. A professional boat builder since 1978 and the author of *Canoes and Kayaks for the Backyard Builder* (International Marine, 1989) and *Umiak* (Walrose and Hyde, 1997), Snaith has traveled to Yupik Eskimo villages since 1998 to work on various boat revival projects. So when he interviews Harvey Golden, who has arguably



the largest collection of kayak replicas extant, the two present a wealth of kayak information and lore.

Much of the DVD is set at Golden's house amidst his collection of replica and original native kayaks, such as a Baffin Island, a baidarka, a King Island complete with clever bone hooks for carrying hunting gear, a West Greenland with ivory facings, and an East Greenland that Skip dubs a "hunting machine" for it carries not only a harpoon but a bird spear, a sail-like screen for camouflaging the approaching hunter, and a round, open-tambourine-like container filled with coiled harpoon line. Golden travels to museums around the world to study kayaks and takes elaborate notes reminiscent of the wonderful sketches in Adney and Chapelle's *The Bark Canoes and Skin Boats of North America*. As Harvey points out, it's a bummer to return from a long trip only to find that you've forgotten a significant detail. From the looks of these replicas, however, Harvey doesn't forget much.

The DVD includes two animated sections on hydrodynamics covering turbulence, velocity, stream line, the Bernoulli effect, inertia, viscosity, gravity, compression, lift, laminar flow, skin friction, drag displacement, center of gravity, and center of buoyancy. If you are familiar with these terms and already have a good idea of hydrodynamics, these sections will be at least a useful review and perhaps instructive. If you're drawing a blank, however, you will probably hit pause a lot and wish that the DVD offered some printable text that you could read carefully.

Snaith also offers two sections on design where, seated in a comfortable chair, he clips a paper station to illustrate points about flat bottoms, V bottoms, chines, multi-chines, deadrise, and flare. He also uses scale models of kayaks to illustrate points on length, beam, and convex hull shapes. We learn, for instance, that longer boats are usually, but not necessarily, faster than shorter ones, that shorter boats can out-perform longer boats in choppy waters, and that

Baidarka hulls contain concavities, not easy shapes to attain in skin boat construction.

The DVD combines shots of kayaks in action with Skip's observations about design. We see Harvey wiggle himself into a West Greenland kayak with a 15-1/2" beam using a pull grip in the bottom of the mask to slip himself into place. We also see how the Ivaluk Polar kayak's deep bow works with its shallow stern to allow the paddler to execute a quick 180 degree turn of this 18' long boat. Until Harvey paddled his West Greenland kayak he did not understand the purpose of the boat's high, horn-like stern which contributes very little to weather cocking and acts as a silencer, important to hunters.

Anthropology and design theory aside, *Kayak Design at Kayak Way* could earn its keep simply with its presentation of kayaks in action. Harvey rolls and paddles these boats expertly while Skip gives a running commentary on how and why the kayaks perform as they do. Here is a DVD for builders, designers, and paddlers alike.

When I went to bed last night the front room window was rattling under the assault of the latest Northeaster, earlier the national news had been pre-empted to cover this major storm which was predicted to drop 2"-3" of water on frozen ground still weighted down with deep snow drifts. I couldn't see the street lamp at the end of the road, let alone compose any coherent description of what was occurring out on the Sound. The just past full moon was still affecting the tides and the waves crashing on the sea wall could be heard above the roaring wind. The birds were all tucked away wherever they go in brutal weather, even the big swans must have settled into the reeds along the edge of a thawing Clark's Pond. The cottage was feeling pummeled by the persistent deluge.

I was comforted knowing that if the weather didn't let up the Captain and I could float to the top of Plover Hill in the Melonseed, the dory is tied down to her iron pipe supports and covered by a huge snow drift. Sometimes the wind drove the rain horizontally past the house, screaming in frustration as it met resistance. The paint peeling action of wind and water will save me prep time for repainting when things dry out. When the wind let up the feeling of standing under Victoria Falls took over. The water sluiced down from overburdened clouds in impenetrable sheets. The old maple tree 20' in front of the window disappeared in a silvery gelatin emulsion.

During the late afternoon the wind would get its second and third "wind" and tear through the heavy rain, flipping the sodden leaves off the saturated lawn like pancakes from a griddle. The trees and shrubs vibrated like tuning forks and the dog trolley wire thrummed with a tenor cello's resonance.

I could picture the clams hunkered down in their burrows being thankful for the vicious weather which drove the mollusk hunters off the flats in mid-morning. This month's full moon low tides have been accompanied with the first moderate temperatures of the season and people have turned out in droves. The Clam Cop has his work cut out for him this week as many will give in to buck fever and try to dig in closed areas



## Window on the Water

By Chris Kaiser

### Floodpain

for "just a few." Even the hardest clammer had been driven off the flats by the force of the wind driven rain. Now and then there was a break in rain when the wind shook and rattled anything in its path. Thank goodness this wasn't a snow storm or we wouldn't be dug out before the Fourth of July!

When I awakened at 5am this morning the view that greeted me was amazing. Where 4'-6' hard packed snow drifts had sat in sullen lumps, there remained only slender mud splattered bones of winter. The lawn and gardens were all of a similar palette, mixed ochers and dull taupes punctuated with vibrant green as the bulbs poked their noses up through the frozen soil. Crocus blooms are scattered here and there like a handful of discarded Easter candy wrappers. I'd better start the tomato seeds, summer might just happen after all.

A persistent Scotch mist is all that remains of a storm that threatened to ruin both my days off. Although I can't free the dory and get her bottom paint done just yet, I will have the chance to start on some grounds keeping activities and bail off the once frozen slabs weighting down the boat covers.

My Window on the Water is usually in the front room, but it is sometimes the wind-shield of my Outback wagon. During the boating season I drag the Captain and one of the trailered boats from one launching ramp to another searching for the best messing about locations. And weekly I drive across the Ipswich River's watershed to and from work, past the many ponds and streams that make up Essex County's soggy topography.

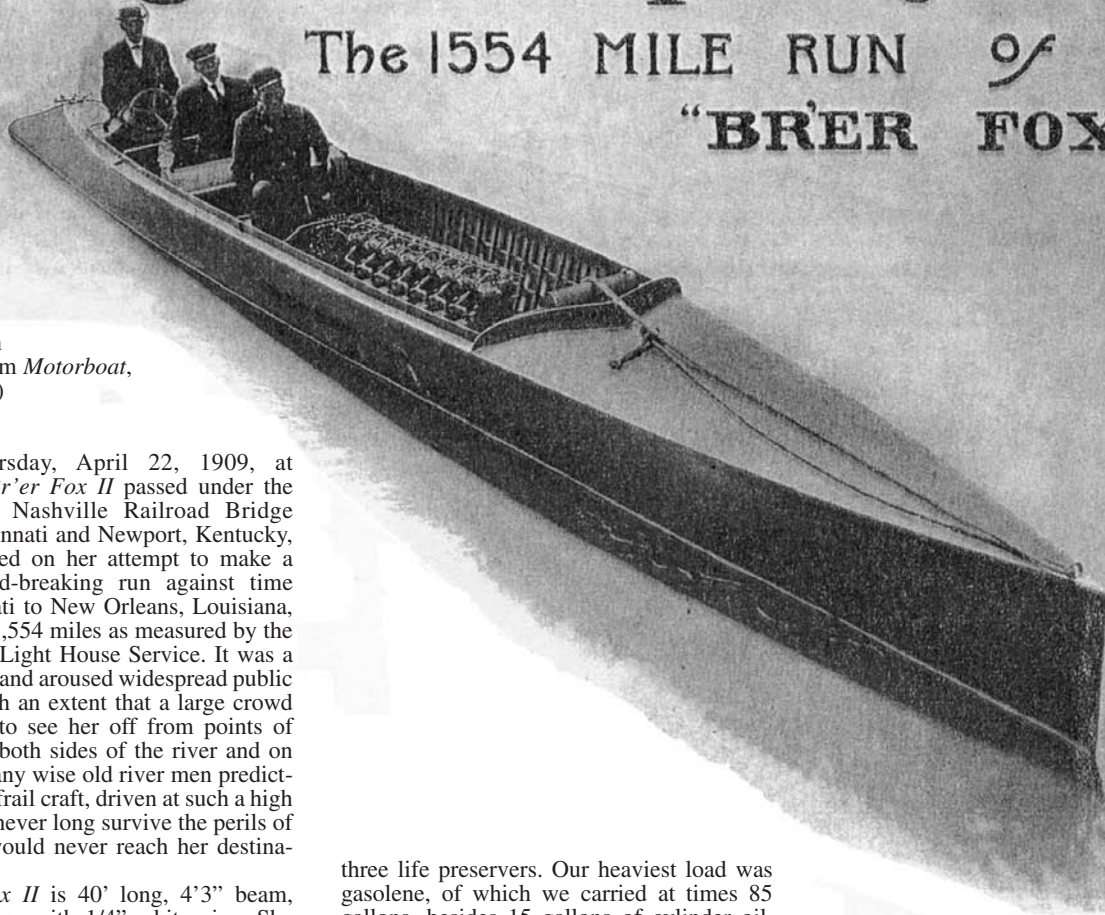
Going into town for breakfast, we came off Great Neck and crossed the marginally raised road between the Great Saltmarsh to the east and the shallow bay west of Eagle Hill. It was just past a full moon so the tide was very withdrawn from the marsh. Looking at the inner crescent was like looking out across a vast bowl of sodden Shredded Wheat. Marsh grasses were still dormant and matted in muddy banks. Puddles of water sat despondently on the top of the marsh, having lost the energy to flow back into the retreating tide. All was hushed, a vacuum compared to last night's tempest.

After savoring the last cup of hot coffee, I drove inland. Leaving Ipswich Center I drove along the river and through Topsfield. The trees were drenched, boughs bent under the force of snow and driving rains. It will be weeks before they snap back into alert postures. Coming up Route 1 past the Topsfield Fairgrounds, I noticed the low soccer meadows were overflowing with river water and ducks and geese gathered there. Across the road new homes have been built in an area that historically floods. Each home is perched on a small raised berm that has thus far kept the water out of the living rooms. Any children living there will be delighted to float toy boats across the lawn, but another good storm will turn this flood plain into a floodpain.

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# FROM CINCINNATI TO NEW ORLEANS

The 1554 MILE RUN of  
"BRER FOX II"



By M.B. Dean  
(Reprinted from *Motorboat*,  
May 25, 1909)

On Thursday, April 22, 1909, at 10:17:05am *Br'er Fox II* passed under the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Bridge between Cincinnati and Newport, Kentucky, and thus started on her attempt to make a world's record-breaking run against time from Cincinnati to New Orleans, Louisiana, a distance of 1,554 miles as measured by the United States Light House Service. It was a daring project and aroused widespread public interest to such an extent that a large crowd had gathered to see her off from points of advantage on both sides of the river and on the bridge. Many wise old river men predicted that such a frail craft, driven at such a high speed, would never long survive the perils of the trip and would never reach her destination.

*Br'er Fox II* is 40' long, 4'3" beam, planked all over with 1/4" white pine. She was designed and built by Wright Brothers at Newport, Kentucky, on racing lines and is of ribband carvel construction. Her power equipment consists of an eight-cylinder 5"x5" Fox motor, rated 56 to 65 horsepower, swinging a 22" diameter, 44" pitch wheel at 750-800rpm. She is owned by M.B. and A.G. Dean, of the Fox Reversible Gasoline Engine Company of Newport, Kentucky, which is opposite Cincinnati. This record-breaking race was planned as an endurance test of the motor, announcement having been made that an attempt would be made to cover the distance in 60 hours actual running time. The best previous record was that of the steamer *Queen City* which had covered the same run in 109 hours.

As the boat shot out from under the bridge there was a cheer from the watching crowd, a roar of saluting cannon, and a wild din from the boats and factories on the riverfront which was answered by the three occupants of the boat and *Br'er Fox II* settled down to business. The three aboard were M.B. Dean, one of the owners, Harry Doss, pilot, and Mike McClain, engineer.

Cincinnati was soon left behind and at 11:15:20 we passed Aurora, Indiana, 27 miles from our starting point, and then let her out in spite of a strong head wind which threw back blinding spray from our eight belching exhausts. We had prepared for this, however, and were all equipped with slickers and with automobile goggles, and in addition we had necessary changes of clothing and

three life preservers. Our heaviest load was gasoline, of which we carried at times 85 gallons, besides 15 gallons of cylinder oil, and, as a result, the speed of *Br'er Fox II* was necessarily retarded for she was loaded 4" below her proper lines.

Without a stop we sped past various towns on both sides of the river and were saluted by hundreds as we flew past. At each town our time was taken and reported to various papers, then sent to the office of the Fox Company. In addition, the writer had a stop watch constantly before him and the exact time of passing the wharf boat of each town was taken and recorded in the Pilot Manual issued by the United States Government Light House Service, showing the distances between all the towns and lights on all the western rivers. A complete and accurate tabulation of the various runs of *Br'er Fox II* has thus been prepared.

Thus we passed Rising Sun, Warsaw, Florence, Vevay, Ghent, Carrollton, and Madison without incident, but at Eighteen-Mile Island, 112 miles from Cincinnati, our gasoline pump sucked dry and, fearing that we had too little reserve to carry us to Louisville, we had to break our run at Utica and hunt up sufficient fuel to finish the day. We had figured 40 gallons to Louisville, 132-1/2 miles, but when underway found that we could not pump the tanks dry and our first disappointment was the necessity of this stop before reaching Louisville.

This delay consumed 48 minutes and 16 seconds and, while at the bank, the motorboat *Harry*, from Louisville, met us for a trial of speed in the remaining 6-1/2 miles. The

*Harry* started slightly in our lead for we had to make a turn and were troubled also by the change of fuel interfering with our carburetors, but with six cylinders in action we soon overhauled her and led her into Louisville by three minutes, arriving at 4:2:08; distance, 132-1/2 miles. Elapsed time to this point, 5:45:03; lost time, 48:16; net running time, 4:56:47.

Before leaving the boat we put 80 gallons of gasoline in our tanks and stowed a reserve 10-gallon can of gasoline and 10 gallons of cylinder oil on board to be ready for an early start. This extra weight amounted to 800 pounds, or more than four extra men.

The next morning, Friday, we were up at 6am but could not get an early breakfast and it was 7:24:08 before we were underway. To avoid delays in the locks we decided to shoot the falls and rapids at Louisville, for the life-saving station promised to keep an eye on us. Harry Doss was thoroughly familiar with the channel and we felt reasonably safe, but it was an exciting adventure to run at the rate of 42 miles an hour in the swirls and eddies that have wrecked many a craft of much greater strength than *Br'er Fox II*. From Mike's point of view the run was complicated by the failure of cylinder No. 8 to get down to business, and he did a clever job of balancing and changing plugs while underway with the water still boiling around us.

The day was bright and clear with a strong southwest wind so that in the bends of



the river we frequently had the wind dead ahead or over our quarter and the water from our exhausts would have drenched and blinded us but for our waterproof clothing and goggles, but our faces were unprotected and the water, sun, and wind gave us all bad cases of sunburn from which we suffered for several days so that none of us could be shaved until the day before we reached New Orleans. With our faces so tender it seemed often that we were striking hail instead of water, for adding to our speed the velocity of the wind, we were meeting this spray at the rate of 50 or 60 miles an hour and it felt like bird shot.

Our desire to make good time prompted us to run when we might better have tied up at the bank, especially at times when we ran into fields of drift which occasionally extended from shore to shore and apparently left no opening for our boat. At these times we would be compelled to slow down and this, of course, counted against us in our average, for all running time, fast or slow, is included in our record, and the only deductions are for the time that we were actually stopped by drift, fog, accidents, or had landed for meals, gasoline, or for the night. Harry became very skilful in dodging drift and throughout the trip did wonderful work in that he brought us through without a wreck and with but few accidents, as later described.

We ran at good speed past New Albany, West Point, Brandenburg, Amsterdam, and Leavenworth, enjoying the excitement of the run and the ever-changing panorama of the hills and valleys, wonderfully beautiful in the fresh new coloring of the early spring, with here and there a fruit tree in blossom or red bud at its best. Much of the land was under cultivation, the white farm buildings making a pretty picture in their settings of green and brown, and from everywhere people ran to the bank to watch us go by and to time us out of sight. Every resident knows the distance from his place to the next bend in the river.

Between Leavenworth and Alton we lost 10 minutes and 18 seconds because a particularly strong gust blew off my cap and we were far below it before I could get Mike to understand that I wanted to go back for it, having nothing else to wear. We missed it on the first trial and had to go for it a second time, but I couldn't notice that it was any wetter after being in the river than before.

Even with the greatest of care, Harry would frequently run into some small piece of drift, oftentimes merely a twig, but it would lodge on the bow and throw back a drenching spray, and occasionally we were compelled to stop and back away before we could lose it.

Between Carrollton and Tell City, Indiana, we had a wild ride of three miles in 6 minutes and 13 seconds, for here the strong head winds blowing straight up stream against the current had raised heavy swells through which we plunged with the engine turning up 775rpm, according to the Warner indicator which, by the way, proved very valuable for at times we could not tell by other means whether we were getting the best results.

As we reached Owensboro, Kentucky, we noticed that the waterworks saluted vigorously by whistle and later we found that it was a pre-arranged signal to announce our arrival. By the time we reached town there were nearly 2000 people crowding the landing so we went by full speed, taking our time, 1:08:30, as we passed the wharf boat. Then we came around and landed for gasoline and lunch and were given a rousing reception.

During the morning we had covered 150-1/2 miles, government measure. Our elapsed time was 5:44:22; lost time, 10:08; net running time, 5:34:14. Total to Owensboro, 283 miles in 10:31:01.

At 2:47:03 we started again with 60 gallons of gasoline aboard and well fed ourselves, for by this time we all had seamen's appetites and were always glad to find a full dinner pail, no matter what was in it. Without incident we passed Newburg, Evansville, and were confident of a fine run when suddenly *Br'er Fox II* threw her head way out of water, careened wildly to starboard, while we all jumped to port and reached for our life preservers.

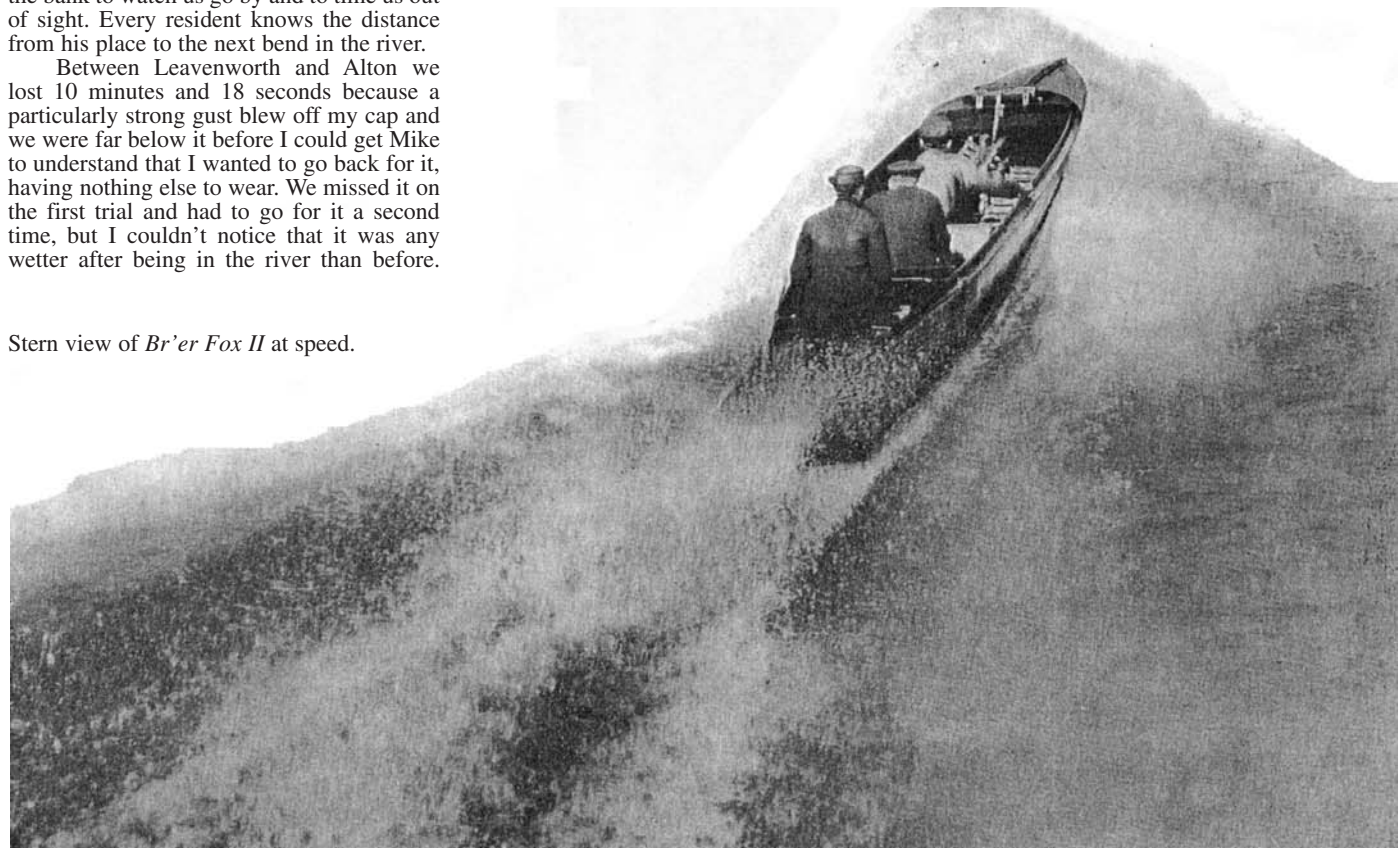
As we lost headway, Mike having stopped the engines, the boat righted. Upon investigation we found that a short willow log had been picked up and lodged fast between the stern and the rudder, forcing it down hard enough to break our tiller line. Repairs cost us 17 minutes and 15 seconds and we were just getting underway after a trial to see that shaft and wheel were not injured, when we passed Henderson, Kentucky, sorry that we could not give the waiting crowd the same demonstration that we had made elsewhere. Without further delay we pulled into Mt. Vernon for the night at 5:33:10, 70-1/2 miles from Owensboro. Elapsed time 2:46:07; lost time, 17:15; net running time, 2:28:52. Total to Mt. Vernon, 353-1/2 miles, 12:59:53.

Again we had trouble getting an early breakfast and by the time our gasoline tanks were filled it was 8:12:08 when we left Mt. Vernon Saturday morning.

Uniontown, Shawneetown, Caseyville, Weston, Cave in Rock, Elizabethtown, Carrsville, Paducah, Metropolis, and Mound City were all behind us when we made our next landing, at Cairo, Illinois, at 2:54:44. This run was broken by four stops, all on account of cylinder 8 which, because it was so far forward, did not seem to be getting a proper oil supply. All the other cylinders were in good shape and this connecting rod of No. 8 was the only engine part that gave us any trouble during the entire trip.

Our stops were as follows:

11:24:03 near Old Maid Crossing Light  
12:55:30... Lost 26:00.  
12:55:30 near Little Chain No. 3... Lost 24:56.  
1:44:31 near Grand Chain No. 4... Lost 20:14.  
2:25:40 near Mound City... Lost 18:30.  
Total, lost 1:39:40.



Stern view of *Br'er Fox II* at speed.

Distance, Mt. Vernon to Cairo, 145-1/2 miles. Elapsed time, 6:42:43; lost time, 1:39:40; net running time, 5:03:03. Total to Cairo, 499 miles, in 18:02:56.

At Cairo No. 8 was given a good chance to cool off while we put aboard 70 gallons of gasoline and 10 gallons of cylinder oil and had lunch. We started again at 4:27:10 and pushed out into the mighty Mississippi, the Father of Waters. We observed at once that the towns were not so frequent and, fearing that No. 8 might not behave until thoroughly overhauled, decided to stop at Hickman early enough to do the work. In front of Hickman we had our first experience with Mississippi bolls and swirls, the terrors of boatmen, and were delighted to find that *Br'er Fox II*, though tossed about and rocked from side to side by the conflicting currents, was helped by her length and her fast headway and came through finely. We landed at Hickman at 5:37:55, besieged and welcomed by the usual crowd of interested boatmen. Immediately inspecting No. 8 we found it cool and apparently in good condition and consequently let it alone.

Distance from Cairo, 39-5/8 miles; elapsed time, 1:10:45; lost time, none; net, 1:10:45. Total to Hickman, 538-1/2 miles, in 19:13:41.

Determined to get an early start we left Hickman at 6:02:15 Sunday morning, intending to breakfast at Carruthersville. We got into action quickly, all of the cylinders hitting well and settling down to business at full speed. We anticipated a fine run for there was less drift in the river and we did not have to run so carefully. We had just passed New Madrid, 39-3/8 miles from our start, and I had not yet put on my slickers when suddenly the boat quivered and immediately we were deluged by water. Mike made a quick stop as soon as he could get his breath and find the levers. Our first thought was that we had struck a sunken log so Mike threw in his spark to try the wheel and, as we gained headway, we were treated to another bath before we could stop. This time we examined the bow and found that we had hit a heavy oak plank, 4-1/2 feet long, 12 inches wide and 2-1/2 inches thick, end on, while it was waterlogged and floating submerged. The force of the blow had split this plank for 22 inches and wedged it on our bow and had bent and loosened the brass protector on our stem and we decided to go to bank for repairs at 7:38:40, having lost 17 minutes and 40 seconds since the collision. Distance from Hickman, 40 miles. Elapsed time, 1:36:25; lost time, 17:40; net, 1:18:45.

Disabled and with no breakfast in sight, we hailed with joy the appearance of a shanty boatman, who came to see what "that long, black snake might be." When we explained our difficulties he assured us that he could cook us a mess. He did, and we ate it. Then we returned to *Br'er Fox II* and repaired our stem and also fixed No. 8 in short order so that we had no further trouble from that quarter throughout the trip. With all in readiness, we started again at 11:12:53 after a stop of 3 hours 34 minutes 13 seconds.

We had run but a few minutes before we encountered the largest field of drift we had yet seen and had to run at slow speed for so long a time that our storage battery became exhausted for our Motsinger magneto was set requiring 500 revolutions of the engine before it would give an efficient spark. This was an unexpected trouble and we feared a

tedious delay, but fortunately the current carried the drift to one side and after a delay of 14 minutes 53 seconds the battery had come up enough to give us a start at full speed while Harry found a channel through the drift. Without further accident we reached Carruthersville, long overdue, but an expectant crowd was waiting for us. Time, 1:07:53. Distance, 41-3/8 miles. Elapsed time, 1:54:40; lost time, 14:53; net running time, 1:39:47.

At Carruthersville we took on gasoline, had lunch instead of breakfast, and at 2:57:10 resumed our journey. We had passed the large field of drift and found a clear run of 83-1/4 miles to Randolph, Tennessee, without a stop. Arriving at 5:51:40 we tied up for the night. Distance, 83-1/4 miles. Elapsed time, 2:54:40; net time, same. Total to Randolph, 703-1/4 miles; time, 25:06:53.

It was with much regret that we gave up our cherished hope of reaching Memphis on Sunday afternoon, for we had announced that we expected to arrive at that time, and our accident of the morning had forced us to disappoint hundreds of people who spent Sunday afternoon awaiting our arrival. Randolph is a small place but we found excellent lodgings with a private family and were accommodated with an early breakfast, which put us underway for Memphis at 6:20:10 Monday morning destined, however, to have a new experience.

It had rained slightly during the night and the atmosphere was heavy. We were passing through a wide reach in the river when a heavy fog blew down and settled around us, so dense that we dare not proceed even at slow speed. We stopped at 7:08:10 and in the stillness that followed the stopping of our engine were surprised to hear the splashing of a paddle wheel and distinct sounds of moving machinery on an approaching steamer, which we had not seen because she was already in the fog when we ran into it. We started up enough to run to bank to get out of her way, and laid by 1 hour 4 minutes 8 seconds before we dared proceed. Without further delay we reached Memphis at 9:05:32. Distance, 50-1/4 miles. Elapsed time, 2:46:22; lost at bank, 1:04:08; net running time, 1:42:14. Total to Memphis, 753-1/2 miles; 26:49:07, net time.

At Memphis we quickly filled our tanks and, waving farewell to the crowds on the landing and the saluting boats in the harbor, set out for Helena, Arkansas, at 10:16:02.

We were running at fast speed in fine, clear, water, the engine singing a song dear to speed lovers, when suddenly, at 12:45, we felt that we were on an airship for *Br'er Fox II* started skyward and we were raked fore and aft by a log that Harry had not seen. By some miracle the only damage was to our brass bow stem, which was knocked loose and bent. We wasted 18 minutes 5.5 seconds trying with a hammer to hit it a hard enough blow underwater to straighten it. It was improved considerably when we started again at 12:58:45, but threw a heavy spray that soaked everything in the boat before we reached Helena at 1:27:30. Throughout this run of 90-1/8 miles the engine performance was splendid. Our elapsed time was 3 hours 11 minutes 28 seconds; lost, 18 minutes 55 seconds; net running time, 2:52:33.

At Helena we were given a fine reception, and while our stem was being repaired by the ship carpenters of the Helena Ship Yards we were treated to a fine spread in the

company's mess and told of the incidents of our run to an interested crowd. In looking back we wonder at the courtesies that have been showered upon us, for we were hard-looking customers. Our faces unshaven, burned, and liberally doped with cold cream which caught and retained the smoke from our exhausts, and with clothes soggy and unsightly, but, in spite of all this the interest in our run seemed to increase and our wonderful little craft was the center of attraction wherever we stopped.

We left Helena at 3:08:02, hoping to reach Rosedale, Mississippi, before night. Our engine was clipping off the miles in a most satisfactory way and showing no signs of heating. We had covered most of the distance when Harry spied drift ahead, signalled to Mike to slow down, and turned hard aport to escape, but it was too late. We missed what was showing above the water but got our worst jolt in the entire trip and came suddenly to a dead stop. Harry had been standing up to get a better view and only by clutching the wheel was he saved from flying overboard. I looked back in the stern, expecting to see water pouring in, and Harry said: "It's all off, put for shore, Mike."

I do not know what saved us but that 1/4-inch boat withstood that shock and, finding that she wasn't sinking, Mike turned the engine over by hand and apparently both shaft and wheel were intact, so we started up. It was only for a moment, however, for as soon as the clutch was in the boat quivered, trembled, and shook like a jolting machine and we stopped. Knowing that the trouble must be with the wheel, I stripped off my clothes and went overboard to investigate. I was delighted to find that the wheel was all there but wrapped about with long strips of bark and tough green willow twigs. As soon as these were removed we cautiously started again and I finished dressing while underway. The delay had only amounted to 30 minutes 4 seconds but it seemed a long while, for I feared we were damaged beyond repair, and Harry said: "I wouldn't have given five cents for our chances of reaching New Orleans."

By this time there were indications of a storm and we dared not continue to Rosedale, but tied up at Laconia at 6:06:35. On inquiry, we found there was no hotel but that we might possibly find accommodations with Colonel Warfield. We made snug for the night, protecting everything as best we could from the approaching storm, and were made welcome by Colonel Warfield with warm southern hospitality and thoroughly enjoyed his stories of times before the war, for he was born on his plantation, and had lived there for 59 years.

During the night we had a driving rain lasting well into the morning, and when finally we were able to go to *Br'er Fox II* we found her in a bad shape. The watchman had failed to pump her out when it rained and the water had risen until it short-circuited our storage battery and exhausted it so that we could not start, and we lost the entire day getting supplies at Rosedale to enable us to proceed. At 5:30 all was ready, and for the benefit of those who had helped us out of trouble, we made a demonstrating run for a few minutes and laid by for the night.

Early the next morning, Wednesday, we were ready to start, having breakfasted on sandwiches and coffee kept hot in our Thermos bottle. We left Rosedale at 6:17:15



and for a few miles were bothered by drift and had to stop, losing 13 minutes 10 seconds. After clearing the drift we developed a new trouble at 8am, for the engine started to race and we found the clutch slipping. After several futile attempts to tighten it sufficiently to hold without pins, we greatly improved matters by washing out all the oil with gasoline and, in spite of a loss of 1:30:34 on this work, reached Greenville at 10:49:13. Distance, 87-3/8 miles. Elapsed time, 4:30:58; lost time, 1:43:44; net time, 2:47:14. Total to Greenville, 1,028-7/8 miles; net running, 34:57:23.

The usual crowd of interested spectators saw us make a spectacular start from Greenville mid swirls, eddies, and cross currents, at 12:43:02, and with a good supply of gasoline to feed the motor and ourselves well fed and stocked with fruit, we determined to put some distance to our credit before night. Without a single stop and slowing down only once to lose a piece of drift on our boat, we ran past Lake Providence at 2:55:22, having covered 69-3/8 miles in 2 hours 12 minutes 20 seconds, and continued without a break to Vicksburg, 65-1/2 miles more, arriving there at 5:10:08, thus finishing a non-stop run of 134-7/8 miles in 4 hours 27 minutes 6 seconds, slightly better than 30 miles an hour. At Vicksburg they had received word by telegram, giving our time both leaving Greenville and passing Lake Providence, and before we were fairly tied up we were the center of a congratulating crowd, for never had such time been approached in covering the distance between these cities. Distance, 134-7/8 miles. Elapsed time, 4:27:06; stops, none; net running time, 4:27:06. Total to Vicksburg, 1,163-3/4 miles; running time, 39:24:29.

At Vicksburg it was hard to get away from those who wanted to talk of *Br'er Fox II* and her achievements, but notwithstanding our shortage of sleep we were up early, had a good breakfast, and started off again at 6:44:35 Thursday morning. After such a splendid performance the day before we felt that everything now favored a quick finish.

The engine started off as if determined to please Mike, and he smiled with appreciation and gave her oil, but it was not to last long. The gentle morning breeze, which had induced us to ride with hats off, increased in velocity, and by 8 o'clock we were fighting a stiff head wind which kept all hands busy and allowed us no time to appreciate the beauties of the country through which we were passing. By the time we reached Hard Times, Louisiana, where we caught the full force of the wind, heavy seas were running, and *Br'er Fox II* plunged into them head on, bobbing like a cork. The flying spray was interfering with our spark and for this reason, and to save *Br'er Fox II* from too severe pounding, we were compelled to slow down and this we did with regret, for we feared clutch troubles would return if we kept changing our speed. At Hardscrabble, 1,214 miles from Cincinnati, we sighted the *J.B. Finley* with a tow of 37,000 tons of coal in 39 barges. As Harry had been pilot of the *Finley* on her previous trip, we gave *Br'er Fox II* all she could stand and went by the *Finley* cutting a fine dash. All hands came to the rail and gave us a salute. We had left the *Finley* several miles behind and were nearing St. Joseph when the wind freshened to a gale. We did not dare to take its full force and the heavy swells running at Goldman's, where the wind has a full ten-mile reach against the current, so we went to the bank at St. Joseph, at 9:45:25. In about three hours the *Finley* came in sight and at a point half a mile above us went to bank for the same reason. Before long the officers put out a yawl and came to inspect our outfit and to bid us welcome on board the *Finley*, for there were prospects of high winds all day. We accepted with alacrity, sorry to lose our run into Natchez but glad of shelter from the storm. Making fast to the last of her barges, we went aboard the *Finley* and spent the day and night in company with the royal crowd of good fellows who turned out of their own bunks that we might be more comfortable, feasted us till we could eat no more, and in every way extended courtesy which we shall long

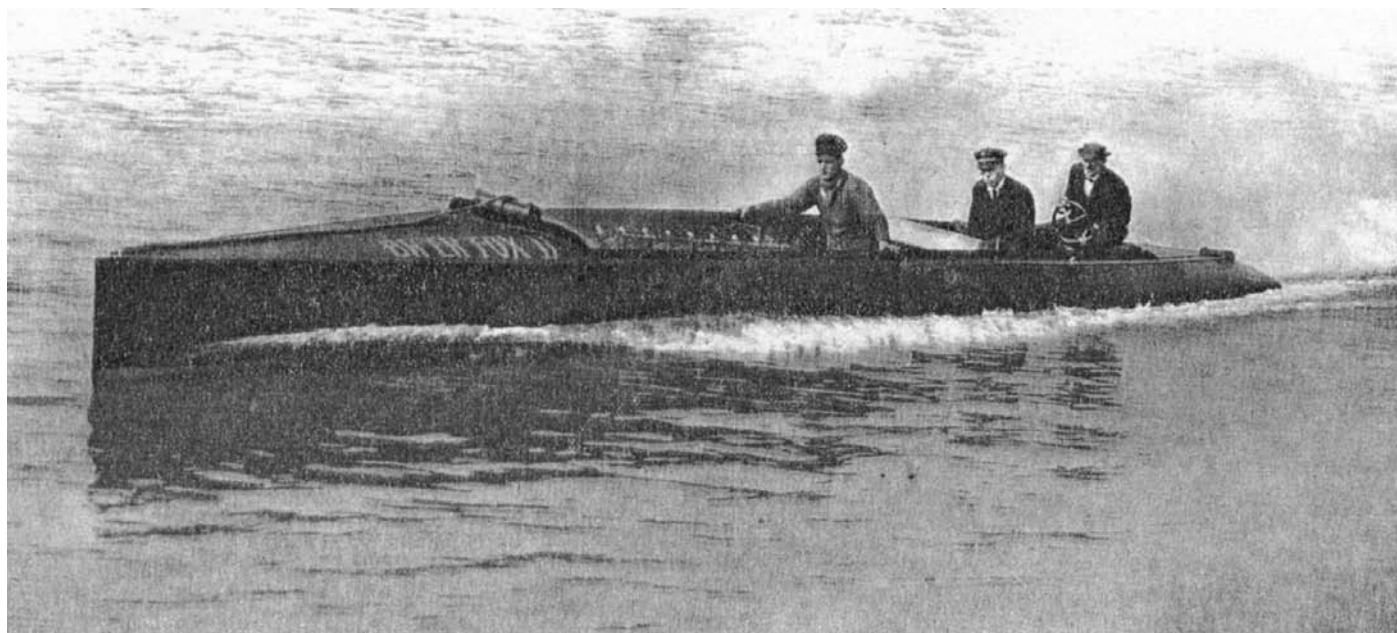
remember. Distance to St. Joseph, 58-3/4 miles. Elapsed time, 3:00:50; lost time, 49:35; net running time, 2:11:15.

At daybreak, Friday morning, it was still blowing hard and the captain of the *Finley* decided to stay where he was well off but we, in our zeal to finish our run, put off at 7:39:15, adding as a fourth man to our crew, Joe Hiller, who had been sent to take us to Natchez. We had just gotten well underway when we picked up drift and slowed down to dislodge it from our bow. Starting again in the heavy swells, Mike put too much force behind the clutch in forcing it home and broke the clutch rocker arm off short. This was not through any fault of the Michigan clutch, which throughout the trip was subject to the severest strain, and we had been warned by the builders to go easy picking up such a heavy load. On account of limit in clutch space, we used a smaller one than recommended and succeeded in making it carry the overload.

There was nothing to do but back to the *Finley* for repairs. We were again welcomed and given able assistance. We could not replace the cast-iron parts but had to make a new piece from boiler iron. The delay was tedious, but the weather conditions were adverse and we could not have made satisfactory progress in any event for the storm was not yet over. We had dinner on board the *Finley* and got underway at 1:55:03 in a lull between storms and made a satisfactory run to Natchez, Mississippi, arriving in good shape at 3:35:20.

Another storm was gathering, and before we were loaded with gasoline it had broken furiously with wind, rain, thunder, and lightning and it was out of the question to proceed. The morning papers showed that this storm had devastated the country far and wide and in the south had taken over 200 lives. We realized then why the water had been lashed so furiously and were thankful that our frail craft had come through safely. Every time the engine had been given a fair chance she had clipped off the distance at a most satisfactory rate, but taking advantage

*Br'er Fox II* and her crew.



of every opportunity we had run only two hours 11 minutes and 15 seconds on Thursday and 1 hour 40 minutes and 24 seconds on Friday so that our summary for Friday showed but little progress. Distance 45-1/8 miles. Elapsed time 1:40:24; net running time 1:40:24. Total to Natchez, 1,267-5/8 miles; time 43:16:08.

In an effort to make up for lost time we decided to try to reach New Orleans the next day, for we felt sure that we could cover the remaining 290 miles under favorable conditions. Accordingly, we made our earliest and best start and left Natchez at 5:22:50 Saturday morning. The day was perfect and at that hour there was scarcely a breath of wind. Our swift flight in the fresh morning air was exhilarating and we were happy and confident, but again we were to be disappointed. As the sun mounted the wind rose and again it was dead ahead. Determined to stick to it if possible, we let her have all she could stand while Harry picked our way over the smoothest course. We lost 55 minutes 10 seconds by a stop at 7:50:40 because of the clutch, which was not well repaired at first, and to avoid a recurrence of this delay drove in the loose pins and decided to use the clutch with pins for the rest of our journey and to rely on working the engine fast or slow and cutting out various cylinders as occasion might require when making landings. This proved to be a good scheme for from then on we had no lost time from any cause until the end of our run, except the delays at bank caused by the high winds and heavy seas.

We passed Bayou Sara, 111 miles from Natchez, at 10:07:31 and continually ploughed through increasing swells to Baton Rouge, arriving there at 11:15:40. We ran this 35-3/8 miles in 1 hour 8 minutes and 9 seconds, which was regarded as wonder indeed by the river bell at Baton Rouge. It must be remembered that in a winding river, wind which will make one stretch impassable may be harmless around the next bend, and thus it was that we could run and make good time in some places, then be compelled to stop because we had come to a long, wide reach when the wind had full sweep and through which even towboats or steamers dared not proceed.

At Baton Rouge I had the honor of delivering a letter from Governor Harmon of Ohio to Governor Sanders of Louisiana, which read as follows:

State of Ohio  
Executive Department  
Columbus  
My Dear Governor

I have always envied the relations which tradition imputes to the Governors of North and South Carolina, and while Ohio and Louisiana do not adjoin, they are directly connected by our greatest inland waterway as well as by close commercial ties, so I wish to establish close relations with you. The sons of a classmate of mine, who live across the river at Newport, have designed and built the motorboat *Br'er Fox II*, for the Fox Reversible Gasoline Engine Co., whose members are along. B. and A.G. Dean, who are going to make the journey in her from Cincinnati to New Orleans, the distance 1,554 miles.

It is especially appropriate that the *Br'er Fox II* should bear a message to you from me on such a trip because we both represent commonwealths which are greatly

interested in the navigation of the Ohio and the Mississippi and such a trip as this will, I am sure, draw attention to the possibilities of navigation if the proper stage of water be maintained.

With assurances of my highest respect and esteem, I am, very sincerely yours,  
Judson Harmon"

This incident was a very pleasant diversion and emphasized a feature of the river which has been much commented upon by those interested in our natural water courses.

In the run from Natchez to Baton Rouge we had covered 146-1/8 miles. Elapsed time, 5:52:50; lost time, 55:08; net running time 4:57:42. Total to Baton Rouge, 1,414 miles; net running time, 48:13:50.

There was no abatement of the wind when, after refuelling, we left Baton Rouge at 1:13:32, but Harry said it would not be particularly bad for the next few miles and as the weather forecast showed no prospect of any changes, we decided to try for Plaquemine or possibly Dorialdsville. It was an absurd thing to do for we put in jeopardy the finish of our trip, and by the time we reached Plaquemine we realized that it would be foolhardy to continue. At our high speed *Br'er Fox II* had no time to ride the waves but ploughed straight through them and split the water so that our black hull was covered and from shore we appeared only as a streak of white foam. We were drenched and nearly exhausted from the strain of this short run, when at 5:19:32 we stopped the engines and ran under cover at Plaquemine, but we were 21-7/8 miles nearer New Orleans. Elapsed time 45 minutes flat. Total to Plaquemine, 1,435-7/8 miles; net time 48:58:50.

In Plaquemine there was intense interest in *Br'er Fox II* for in this section Fox motors have been in use for several years and there are about 125 launches and work boats equipped with them.

During the afternoon we dried our clothes on the hotel veranda, for I found over an inch of water in my suitcase and everything wringing wet. Even the photo films taken at points of special interest were ruined and all hope of thus illustrating the Log of *Br'er Fox II* was lost forever.

At sundown the wind abated, as usual, and by special request we made a demonstrating run before a crowd of several hundred people on the levee, some of whom had driven 12 miles to see *Br'er Fox II*, but it was too late to proceed and we spent the night at Plaquemine, with 168-1/2 miles to our credit for the day in 5 hours 42 minutes and 42 seconds and New Orleans only 118-1/8 miles away.

Fortune did not favor us on that account, however, for with the sun the wind came up again from the same direction and quite against his judgment Harry took the wheel for a start at 8:20:14 Sunday morning. It was practically a repetition of our run to Plaquemine, but we stood it for nearly two hours and after passing other boats laid by for calmer weather, we were forced to land at 9:10:52, after covering 59-1/2 miles. Elapsed time, 1:58:02.

After we were ashore and had dried out a bit in the sun, the fear of disappointing the waiting crowd at New Orleans, as we had done at Memphis, spurred us on to another attempt. It proved useless, for starting at 12:22:35 we had gone only 10-1/2 miles to St. John when we landed again at 12:55:03, much to Mike's disgust. He had the engine

turned up to a 30-mile clip and to lose so much time and speed on account of the unfavorable weather hurt his feelings severely. Elapsed time to this point, 32:28; distance, 10-1/2 miles.

At St. John we laid by until 4:01:25 and Mike, meanwhile, had gone on a foraging expedition. He returned with a fearful combination of sausages, cheese, oranges, crackers, and hamburger steak in a tin can, but by this time anything to eat was acceptable and, after making a fair meal, we turned over the remnants to a crowd of French boys who had joined the Sunday throng that, from curiosity, crowded the levee to see our now famous craft.

Harry expected the wind to abate toward evening and we waited as long as possible for it to do so. By 4 o'clock it was less violent and we decided to try again, and to slow down if necessary in the worst places and let her have it all whenever we could stand it. At first our progress was slow, but toward evening the conditions improved until finally at Carrollton, above New Orleans, a bend in the river gave us a favorable opportunity, and under full head we shot past the docks and shipping with an occasional salute from tugs and ferries and passed Canal Street at 5:57:03.

Then we turned and such welcome as we had passing up the river! The news of our arrival, announced by our exhaust, had crowded the docks. Every boat under steam saluted as we flew by and ran up to a safe anchorage behind the coal fleet at Calhoun street.

From St. John we had covered 48-1/8 miles in 1 hour 36 minutes and 38 seconds to Canal street, and for the day had covered 118-1/8 miles in 4:27:08, thus completing our run of 1,554 miles in 53 hours, 25 minutes and 58 seconds, beating all previous records for speed and distance and bettering our own estimate of 60 hours by 6 hours 34 minutes and 2 seconds.

We had maintained an average speed of 29.08 miles an hour and had established a new standard by which to judge the endurance and efficiency of marine motors. It is impossible to conceive a more severe test than this run of *Br'er Fox II* at high speed, hour after hour and day after day, and it proves conclusively that her motors have design and mechanical qualities of which we, as makers, may feel justly proud. It is obvious that to endure such a run the motor and all its parts and accessories must be and remain in perfect balance. It is only just to note, moreover, that this outfit was of stock design in every feature excepting only the case, which was made of aluminum to save weight, but the cylinders, bearings, connecting rods, shaft wrist, carburetors, etc. were in all respects identical with those supplied in regular stock equipments.

It is notable also that *Br'er Fox II* reached her destination in perfect condition for additional runs. Aside from surface scratches due to hard usage, the hull was as sound, rigid, and dry as could be desired, a result most creditable to her builders, and her engine seemed to do better the more it was run. Throughout her stay in New Orleans *Br'er Fox II* made daily runs for the benefit of those desiring to see her in action, and on Saturday, May 8th, ran from New Orleans into Lake Ponchartrain through the Lake Borgne canal, and on this run of 75 miles, under adverse conditions, meeting rolling



seas in the lake, made a record of 2 hours and, 55 minutes and the next day ran under the auspices of the Southern Yacht Club.

*Br'er Fox II* has now been shipped to the factory and will be sold or held for entry in various races, for many requests for her appearance at regattas are already on file. If entered in races *Br'er Fox II* will be equipped with a wheel designed for 1,000rpm for her past performance has shown that both boat and engine are capable of even higher speed when put in racing condition.

M.B. Dean, Captain; Harry Doss, Pilot; Mike McLain, Engineer, A.G. Dean, one of the owners.



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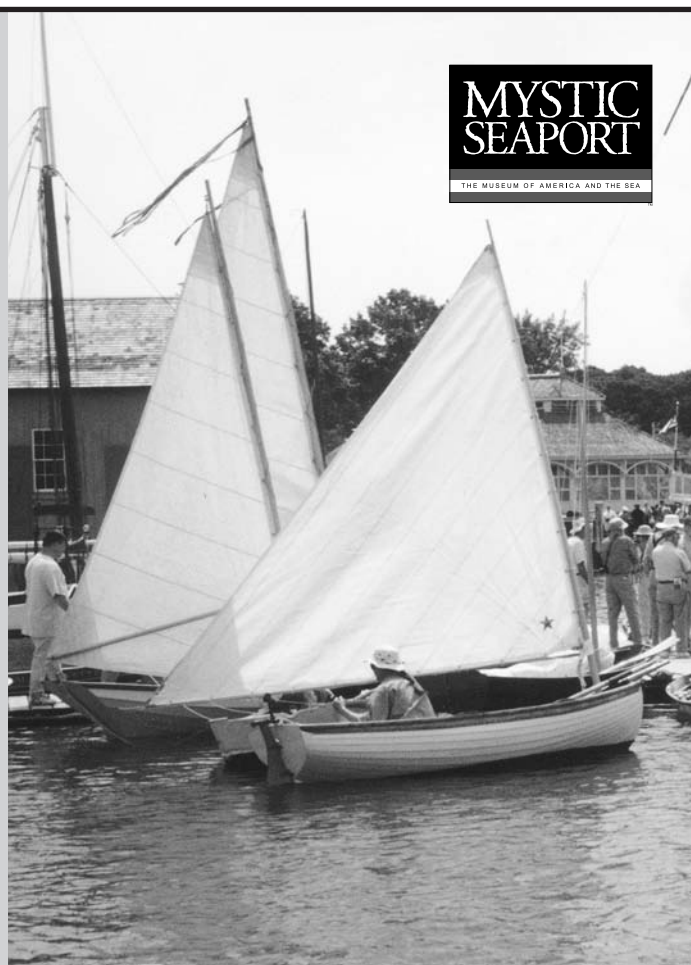
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*Loon* was launched in the river town of Antioch, just upstream of the new highway bridge 21 miles upstream from San Francisco Bay and 46 miles by road from the city. Antioch is a good jumping off place for boats bound for delta. *Loon* is a typical Drascombe Lugger except for her full length tent cover. Aboard are two anchors for delta cruising, one for the bow, which goes ashore, and a stern anchor to hold off the stern in deeper water. Sometimes a tree replaces the bow anchor. A foam pad fitted to the floorboards

## The Hidden Delights of the California Delta

(Originally published in *Cruising World*, May 1983)

By Thomas Fulk

completes sleeping arrangements. Cooking is minimal on these short cruises but a small propane stove makes simple hot dishes and it provides the best part of cruising, a steaming pot of early morning coffee.

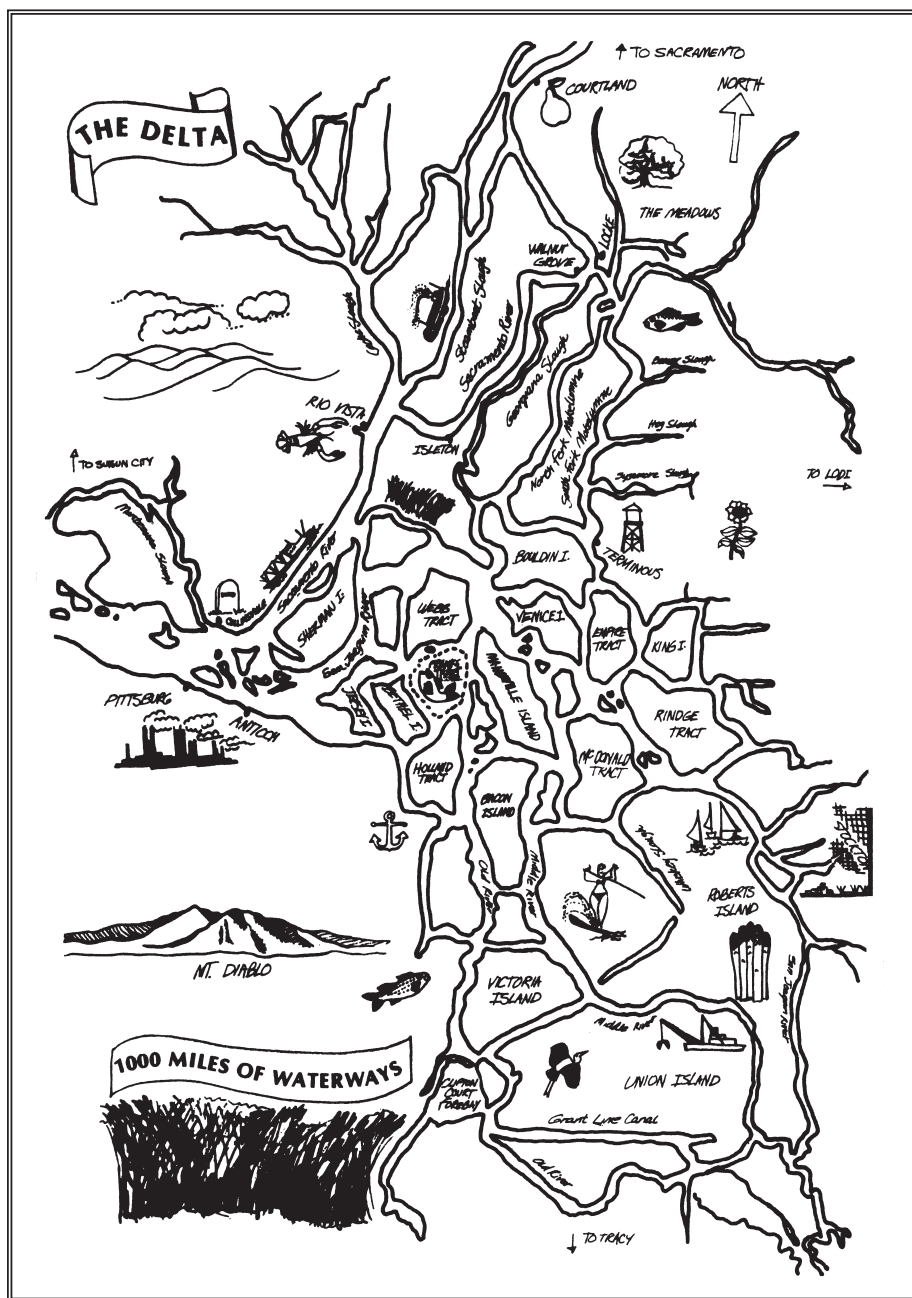
My destination was a small cove not far from Potato Slough, 18 miles upstream from launch point but all downwind. With chow and refreshments to last a week if necessary, *Loon* was well ballasted and carried all sail for a fast downhill run.

Potato Slough is a popular destination for cruising sailboats. Passage from the ocean is deep and unobstructed all the way to

two leeseid island anchorages. On weekends it's not unusual to find 30 to 40 boats rafted behind the first island, but many small coves elsewhere offer virtual seclusion, especially for *Loon* since she can be poled into an endless variety of choice anchorages.

Small islands parallel to dikes form protected overnight spots that are available even to deep-draft sailboats. Prevailing summer winds are westerly, in the 15-25mph range every afternoon. Summer rain is virtually unknown, temperatures are usually in the 80s or above, and the sun is bright.

Delta navigation is not difficult. The area is well charted (#18661 covers the area of my cruise) but there are a few well-defined hazards. Cable ferries, which present a hazard if you try to cross over the taut cable when the ferry is operating, are clearly marked on the charts. Strong winds blowing upstream through wide rivers and narrow channels make upwind sailing difficult in the main river and impossible in the sloughs and cutoffs. Ripped dikes are the number one hazard, each one is a rocky lee shore. Engine failures can be bad news given the typical wind strength, it's nearly impossible to anchor quickly in some narrow but deep channels. For maximum safety, the anchor should be ready to slip at a moment's notice with the anchor and warp led aft outside the shrouds to save time.



*Loon* is a typical Drascombe Lugger.

On short cruises, the only gear and provisions allowed are the bare essentials.





Shipping is a more subtle hazard and one that is easily overlooked with a sun-warmed body and a relaxed frame of mind. Ships are confined to narrow channels and must be avoided by small boats. Down bound vessels are usually light and high in the water. They maintain good speed to keep steerageway in the strong winds and they are quiet.

Bridges are frequent in upstream areas, but there is a wide choice of routes so they do not present a problem to sailors. *Loon* is readily unrigged, I take shortcuts under bridges as the mood strikes me.

Tidal influence is moderate so the wa-ter is mainly fresh. Currents vary a great deal by season according to usual patterns for stream flows, but you can expect strong currents under bridges and narrows.

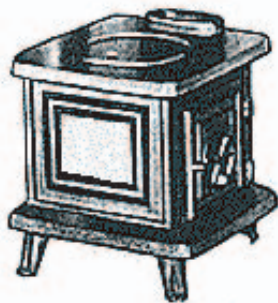
The rich farmland on delta islands is the result of diking and reclamation by Chinese laborers in the late 1800s. Farmland is now 20' or more below sea level due to sinking and soil loss. Rich organic soils produce truck crops year-round under intensive farming methods. Flooding in the spring is an annual threat with some permanent loss of farms because of reclamation cost and difficulty. Big Break and Frank's Tract are lost farmlands of some years ago. Navigation over flooded areas is not advisable except in small boats because of under-water debris and shallows.

Delta fishing offers catfish, black bass, and striped bass. You just throw a line off your stern and prop up your fishing rod. Evening fishing may produce a catfish or two for breakfast. I didn't fish on this trip but have found fishing to be a good distraction for kids on previous cruises.

Friday morning was well advanced when I folded the tent and stowed the coffee pot, stove, and mattress. A strong west wind suggested shipping the mast and returning under power. I chose a short-cut route down False River, Taylor Slough, and Dutch Slough with just a 1-1/2-mile run in the open river to Antioch. This required three fuel stops, my Seagull outboard will run only about 45 minutes at full throttle on one tank of gas, some reserve time. One eye on the clock maintained vigilance against un-planned stops on a rocky shore and I picked good fueling stops well in advance. The last stretch in the open river was wet, with winds gusting to 30mph right on the nose, but all in all it was an uneventful return to the launching ramp.

My short cruise is easily duplicable in any boat that has even makeshift onboard sleeping accommodations. Longer delta cruises can explore miles of waterways and quiet coves. You can join rafted boaters for delta-style camaraderie or find your own private cove for solitude. Whatever your boat or cruising style, the California Delta holds pleasure in store for you.

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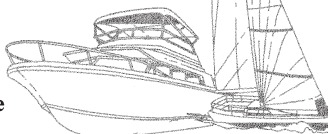
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I am beginning to be self-conscious about talking about cold weather to people who know what cold weather is. Why just the other day, I got a cheerful letter from our editor with a picture of him out there in what looked like four feet of snow with a snow blower trying to dig out a little walking (bicycling?) trail. His car would have been almost completely buried but you could see a wonderful example of Bernoulli's principal where the snow was ditched out all the way around it from the wind.

In case you don't know, Bernoulli figured out that when a fluid (anything that flows, wind is a fluid) has to flow by something that causes a partial obstruction in its path it has to speed up if the same volume of fluid is going to be able make the passage completely around the obstacle and the increased velocity of its passing causes a partial vacuum which sucks stuff up. They say that's why carburetors, wings, sails, and propellers work. Makes sense to me.

I bet it made sense to Bob while he was lying in his warm bed listening to the cold wind howling around his car in the middle of the blizzard, too. I felt for him, but not for the reasons one might think. I sure would hate to have to crank a damned air-cooled 4-cycle lawnmower (rhymes with snowblower) engine in conditions of that sort.

You know I like the way a small 2-stroke engine like an outboard motor starts. For one thing you can feel the compression right off, but a little 4-stroke engine acts like it doesn't know what the hell it is trying to do. No matter which way you position the piston there seems to be a lot of lost slack. You always have to haul a lot of rope to start a 4-stroke lawnmower engine. There is no subtle twitch of the wrist to it like with a 2-stroke outboard. It is sort of like cranking some machine when the clutch is engaged. Big bore hand-started 4-stroke engines like on airplanes, Model T Fords, and Indian Chiefs tell you where the compression is pretty smartly but a damned Briggs and Stratton feels like mush.

I suppose the best ones now are Honda engines but they feel like they ain't got no compression. Of course, a Honda will usually start if you pull hard enough to get enough speed to the machinery so you and Bernoulli can suck up a little fluid through all those leaking valves and junk. I, myself, like a snap to the compression which is best exemplified by a model airplane motor. I would hate to have to start even a Honda when it was cold enough that the oil was wrapped around the crankshaft like a wet rag, but obviously such a thing was not beyond the capability of our capable editor. He even looked cheerful in the picture with the snow blower... but the thing was already running by then.

When I was a boy, we (various chosen ones) used to have to go down to the pond and crank a water pump to pump water to the cattle in the feed lot. I believe my grandfather was the first person in Georgia to operate a silage operation and feed lot. He was a "Progressive Farmer" even though he was scared to death of machinery of any sort. He delegated all that. One time his eight-year-old son was driving him to town in the old 1918 Buick car when one of the rims came unclenched from the spokes of the wheel... which, why in hell did cars have wood wheels ten years after the Wright brothers had invented the airplane? Bicycles didn't have wood spokes. After wood, cars went to

## Lawnmower Engines, Progressive Farmers, Rough Boat Trips, Californians, Hispanic People And Tallahassee

By Robb White

wire spokes. What's wrong with steel disc wheels?

Why do they have all these expensive and fragile alloy (?) rims now? One son had an old Mustang with steel wheels but he changed them out to some fancy rims that he had to re-tighten the lugs on every 20 miles. I drove the old car both ways and it drove exactly the same... just like a Falcon until he changed the rims, then it drove just like a Falcon but only for 20 miles and then it drove like a can of rocks. Automotive engineering and human vanity is a peculiar business ain't it? Me, I'm a baby moon man, myself.

Because he was so scared of machinery, my grandfather never let his driver go any faster than a Tennessee walking horse so when the tire and rim came off it passed them and rolled down the hill ahead of them. "See what I have been trying to tell you," he said. Anyway, I hated the old Wisconsin air-cooled engine when I had to go down there to pump water for the cows when it was cold. It was about 4' high and had a Zenith updraft carburetor hanging down about 18" below the cylinder head. It was rope wrapper style and I had to sure enough exert myself to pull hard enough to get Bernoulli to suck the gas all that way up to where the fire was.

"Why in hell can't these damned cows walk down here to the damned pond where the damned water is?" I demanded to know one day. "That ain't progressive," explained the hired man who also had to trudge down the hill to crank the damned pump.

That brings up the subject of profanity in everyday language... hold your horses... I'll get to the boat part pretty quick. The right to use profanity has to be earned. Just any little foul mouthed brat does not have that right... at least not until he (or she... yes, Virginia, randomly applied foul mouthery is coming into vogue among the ignorant, tattooed, and pierced fine young things of the day) learns proper usage. Just because some kid overheard a little comment from one of his betters does not give him the right to whisper in the ear of another brat at Sunday school just to try to cause a disruption in the droning on and on.

I'll give you a classic example of improper usage. Just up the street from the elementary school in Thomasville is a little sign that says "Hill St." You guessed it. An apparently endless series of little farts have delighted themselves for at least 60 years by defacing that sign. I knew one of the little farts. He is now an old fart. He has been in the Georgia state legislature for 40 years perpetuating the Atlanta SNAFU.

Which, that leads into the closing of this particular interruption. The way one learns to use profanity correctly and hence earn the right to expand his or her speech beyond the

bare basics taught in schools is to grow up in a working man's world... a blue collar situation. I don't think they know what the hell they are doing in the Ivy League but they do down by the train yard. Military service is another way to earn that right but you have to be an enlisted man. Except during times of draft, officers don't know their asses from holes in the ground. I am glad to see that times have changed so that enlisted-puke service men and women (puke-ettes?) are once again heroes. It wasn't like that in my day or any other time since WWII. "Sailors and Dogs Keep Off the Grass" the sign in Norfolk said.

Hog killing weather didn't start down here until January. It was so hot during deer season that I wasn't able to find enough chilly days to fill the freezer. Winter started with a vengeance when it finally came, and it ain't let up yet and here it is the middle of March. It has been cold and bleak for two weeks and stormy and raining off and on, too. All that relentless weather has been going up the coast to Massachusetts and making certain people have to get out and cuss the snow blower, but my sister had some friends coming from California to visit and experience the ambience a little bit and they had heard all about Dog Island and wanted to see what kind of good vibes it had so a visit was on the itinerary.

At least it was supposed to be clear but the vibes were about 20 to 25 knots out of the due west. Me and Jane crabbed on across in the Rescue Minor with a load of junk that would boggle the mind (including the rusty, cursed Honda generator). We haul the generator back to the shop and sort of let the supplies dwindle during January and February and have to re-stock when the weather gets right in March. Now that Jane is retired, we have developed sort of a tendency to stay put. The gas prices are helping, too. We would like to stay put at the coast more than we do, but except for one little insulated cubbyhole, there is no heat in this house and plenty of windy cracks. I do not have the capability of staying hived up too long. I am apt to get involuntary wiggles and utter inappropriate language in confined places.

I knew it was going to be cold and rough and we would have stayed at the shop and tried to accomplish something (the "spring boat" ain't but two months behind this year... a record) except I love to haul Californians in a skiff when it is cold and rough so I volunteered ferry service. We came over by ourselves a day early so we could have time to unload all this crap without supervision. It was a rough, wet, slow trip but we had on our slicky suits and Bert Dow hats and hypothermia did not penetrate all the way in to where our core temperature was. You know a little misery every now and then enhances the appreciation of better times.

Let me tell you about the worst trip we ever had over here. It was back when Jane was teaching school, and during the early spring it was hard to make it before dark after school let out. It was the transition period when we were giving up the hassle of fooling with a big boat just to come over on Friday and back on Sunday. It seemed like we spent most of the time fooling with the boat so we started skiffing it all the time. On a good day it was only about 20 minutes from the boat ramp to the island in the skiff but almost two hours from way up the river where we kept



the big boat (first a 26' surplus motor whaleboat and then the old raggedy Morgan 30 sloop). There were some drawbacks to the skiffboat method though, and one Friday we hit what we hoped was the limit. It was already nearly dark when we got launched and windy.

You can't tell exactly how rough it is going to be out in the bay while you are up at the boat ramp because of the lee of the trees (now condos), but we knew it was going to be bad. It wasn't too cold, though, so we figured we would go. The only alternative would have been to drive that hundred miles back to Georgia so we kept on. Boy, it was real rough. We were in the old two piece skiff (14' all put together) and, though it is seaworthy, it is wet. It was one of those wind situations where every single wave is a whitecap and old Takeapart was slicing the top off of every one of them and throwing it right in Jane's face. She had a sinus infection from a cold she had caught from some sniveling kid (you know modern moms send sick children to school to recuperate) and it was dark and getting cold and... it was just plain a miserable trip... sure was nice to sit up there in the house in our snowmobile suits sipping a little cinnamon tea with a tot of rum in it looking out at the salt crystals glistening on old Takeapart in the moonlight.

Another time I agreed to haul this crusty old newspaper reporter, her daughter, and two teenaged grandsons over here because they had missed the ferry (this was back when there was such a thing) and didn't want to have to drive all the way back to Atlanta. This was back in the motor whaleboat days and it was a real rough trip. Our whaleboat at that time had a tiny wheelhouse back aft of the engine and it was barely big enough to hold all those people's paper bags of groceries, cloth suitcases, a cardboard box of what appeared to be high grade Canadian whiskey, two enormous jam boxes... and me. I had to sit back there with the junk because that's where the tiller was. The old woman, Jane, and the rest had to sit up there in the bow with the engine.

It was rough as anything. We passed the 54' ferry coming back and it was going downwind and bashing into the backs of the waves like it was fixing to broach, but it was late and Raymond was thinking about his supper so he had it hooked up to the max sitting back there all cozy behind his windshield wipers. It wasn't cozy on the whaleboat. Solid sheets of green water were coming off the bow and separating into various sized dollops and blowing back on the people. Luckily it was in the summer time and not dangerously cold, but it was a real rough trip. When we finally got to the dock and pleasantries and thanks were being exchanged, one of the teenaged boys asked me how much horsepower the whaleboat had. The other boy beat me to the answer, "Not nearly enough," he said. "Maybe another time you won't fool around looking for your sunglasses and make us miss the ferry," said the old woman.

Another time I agreed to haul an insurance adjuster back across the bay in the Rescue Minor. It was blowing 25 knots with gusts to 35 by the time he had done all his adjusting and the wind was blowing exactly down the bay from the west like it loves to do. It was in the early spring and, though the air temperature was sort of warm, the water was still cold. I explained the options to the

man as I put on my slickey suit and Bert Dow hat (a genuine old Black Diamond southwester that stinks like rubber enough to make me worry about my engine room the whole time I am wearing it). "This is going to be a cold, wet, slow, rough trip. You might want to call one of these private ferries. He'll come get you for \$120." "No, I believe I'll ride with you, I have a poncho," he replied. I rigged the bilge pump and we set out. In conditions like that I like to run up the bay to windward in the lee of the island to try to get all the downwind I can out of it, so I eased on up the bayside beach in the shallow water. "This doesn't seem so bad to me," he said. When we got to the jumping off place I told him that he might better pull up the hood on his poncho and headed out into the bay. Whoop, it was rough and there wasn't any downwind to it.

At first the refraction of the waves on the shallow flats had us pitching dead into them and the spray was coming over the bow and blowing diagonally off to the lee without but about half of it coming back to us, but as we got out in the channel we wound up running about in the troughs of waves that had come unimpeded clear from St. Vincent Island 30 miles to the west and every one of them was breaking in the shallow bay. Fortunately the man had his back to them but they still hit him pretty hard about every six seconds. The bilge pump could barely keep up. He adjusted himself lower and lower in the boat with every wave. Finally we came to where the refraction was in our favor and we surfed into the river.

It is a good thing the Rescue Minor will run shallow because I was able to cross the flats to the west of the mouth and didn't have to run those enormous almost stationary breakers where the outgoing tide and spring flood current of the river were piling up all that water against the wind right at the mouth. I don't think the insurance adjuster would have liked that. When we got to the dock the wind was blocked by the new flakeboard condos under construction overhanging the old Tiki Bar. There was a new Dog Islander and three Hispanic men loading a whole pickup truck load of 5/8" sheetrock onto a huge, brand new, custom made, buttheaded aluminum skiff with a welded aluminum shelter on the bow, 15 rod holders welded to the roof, and a huge, new 135hp Honda engine on the stern.

The insurance man said, "I wouldn't advise you to go to Dog Island in that today."

"Don't worry, we have a shelter," explained the new (old) boy. I didn't say a word as I poled off and headed back out. After I got back we watched with the binoculars but we didn't see any load of sheetrock come out the mouth of the river. You know Hispanic people tend to understand hardship and danger and because of that usually have good sense.

As an aside, there won't be too many new Dog Islanders hauling sheetrock anymore. The Nature Conservancy owns most of the island and all the developable land has been sold and is already under construction. Big money, flakeboard, vinyl siding, and sheetrock have moved in over here. I don't know what will become of the little original shanties people built back when they still had enough sense to know that anything over here was subject to complete obliteration from about June through December every year. I guess they will be torn down and a

new flakeboard colossi will rise in their places.

Vinyl siding doesn't stick to flakeboard very well during hurricanes so I believe there will be a steady run of insurance adjusters. I bet there is one who won't bill the insurance company for \$120 for transportation and take a free ride in any skiffboat again, though.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot to tell you about the Californians. Despite a steady diet of tofu and couscous, some of them have better sense than to make a hellish rough skiffboat ride just to see a little sandbar island. They went to the St. Marks wildlife refuge instead and I advise anybody who comes this way to do that, too. It is a wonderful way to see what the wild coast of Florida looked like long ago. The lighthouse at St. Marks is the last sign of civilization for a hundred miles to the east... except for jet contrails heading to cursed Tallahassee.

Sidebar: Tallahassee. Though Tallahassee is the capital city of the state of Florida, it is completely out of place. Here it is way up in the woods far away from the teeming population centers its SNAFU attempts to FUBAR. Because of that, it feels paranoid. The citizens (mostly politicians, bureaucrats, college students, and support personnel... nobody builds anything in Tallahassee but government buildings, condos, and roads and work like that is delegated to Hispanic people) do not want to be confused with the primitive country people who surround the city so they go overboard with all sorts of displays of progressiveness. They have become Californicated.

They have imported bumper-to-bumper traffic, tofu, urban sprawl, and examples of erudition of all sorts but it ain't working. Unlike Californians, Tallahasseans do not have the cheerful look and sublime confidence of organically fed vegetarians. They are always looking around like worried birds to make sure nobody is missing the fact that their BMWs have hotshot wheels while they are stuck in traffic trying to get to Starbucks.

## Burt's Canoes

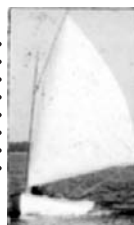
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# Halcyon Days

## Part 4

Weston Farmer

'Twas an ideal time for the greening of young designers. A new building surge hit the boat fame along several lines of market interest. One was the standardized cruiser, pioneered by Elco. This company had built 550 patrol boats of 80' length for the British in 500 working days, starting from scratch. This proved that wooden boats could be mass manufactured and Elco came out after the war with their popular stock 341 Cruisette.

*Motor Boat* magazine helped pioneer this movement in 1919, presenting plans for Everybody's Cruiser. Up until that time every power boat had been custom-designed, custom-built. Everybody's cruiser was a revolutionary idea.

Another product of the war was a glut of surplus Curtiss OX-5 airplane engines which were sold in carloads, brand new, for \$50 each. A Hispano-Suiza 180-200hp, original cost \$5,000, could be had for \$200. These made possible the \$1,500 to \$2,000 mahogany gentleman's runabouts of which Ramaley built and delivered one a month.

The exciting speeds of these boats entranced a new boating public which had left city and farm during WW1 to see how things were done in Gay Paree, which gener-

ally was faster. A desire to own such a boat, provided she was cheap enough, gripped this new influx of sportsmen.

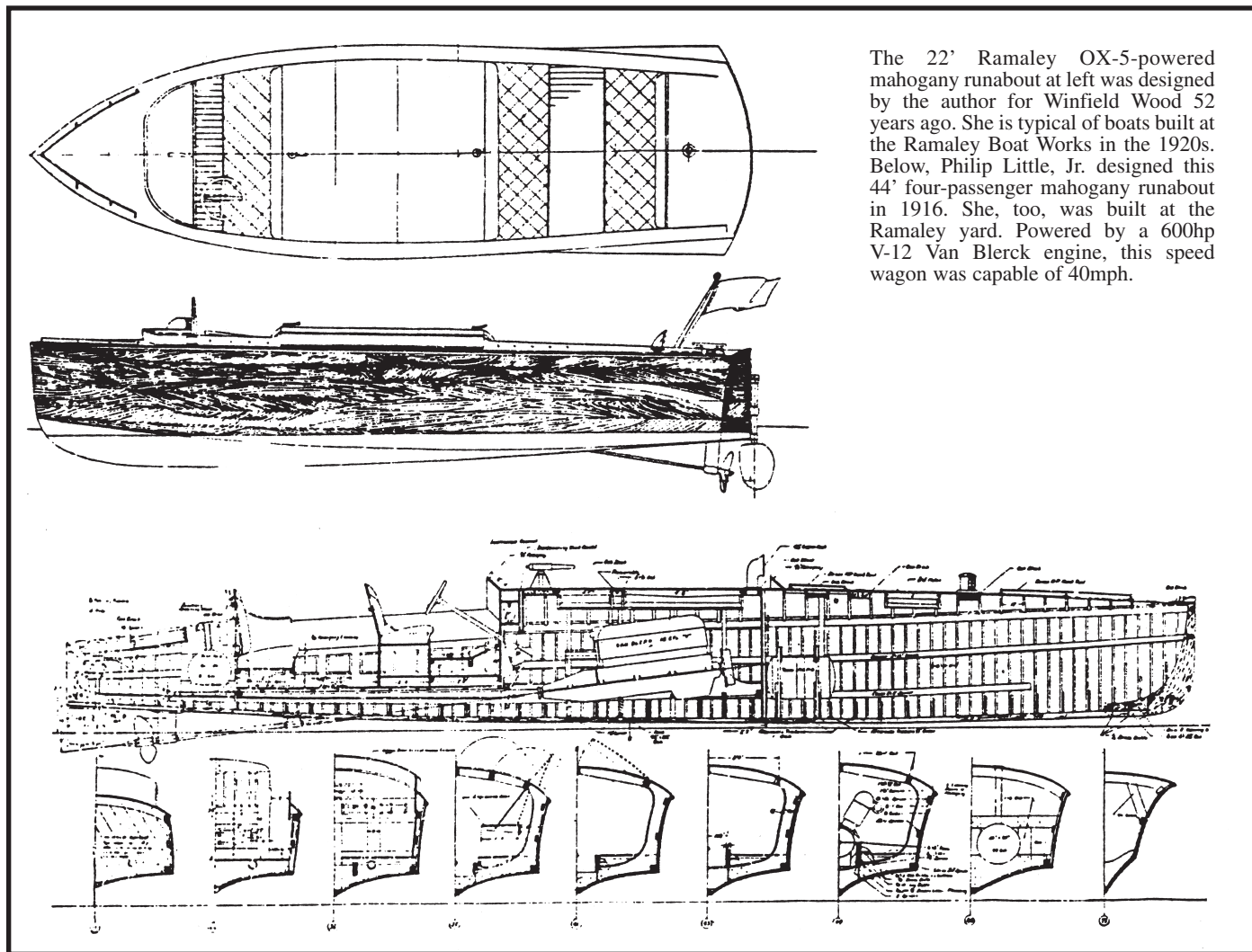
There was a parallel development in the high speed hydroplane world. In 1912 the British Challenger for the Harmsworth Trophy, *Maple Leaf IV*, had followed the multistep idea originally propounded by W.H. Fauber, an American expatriate and engineer living in Paris. *Maple Leaf IV* lifted the Harmsworth so handily that step boats became the fad. Boats were now designed to go over the surface of water instead of through it.

This gave naval architects a new goal to shoot at, the first mile-a-minute motorboat. *Miss Minneapolis*, built by Chris Smith of Algonac for the Minneapolis Athletic Club, hit this mark in 1916. The one-step hydroplane became the boat of development. The Mississippi Valley Power Boat Association held regattas up and down the Mississippi Valley which exposed exciting motorboating to grandstands of thousands. The step hydroplane fever spread to all sec-

tions of the country, even affecting old salts in Maine, as the W.H. Foster drawing on these pages shows.

On the horizon there was still another development that nobody at that time took seriously. This was that substitute for a pair of oars termed an "outboard engine." Up until that time, Charles B. Waterman's vertical outboard motor, introduced in 1907 as a rowboat clamp-on and followed in 1909 by Ole Evinrude's flat-mounted powerhead and better engineered engine, had been hard-to-start knuckle-busters designed to eliminate the chore of rowing over to get Dad on the 5:15.

These engines originally weighed 85lbs. in 2hp form, or about 40lbs/hp, giving at best 5-6mph. When the Lockwood-Ash Company, inboard two-cycle engine builders, finally produced a twin-cylinder outboard motor light enough to pace a one-man scow at 20mph, the pent-up demand among people who had watched the fast new boats go by but couldn't afford one turned the boating world nuts. Portable power boating was born! For a few hundred bucks Joe Blow could get the same fast ride formerly limited to men of big purse.



The 22' Ramaley OX-5-powered mahogany runabout at left was designed by the author for Winfield Wood 52 years ago. She is typical of boats built at the Ramaley Boat Works in the 1920s. Below, Philip Little, Jr. designed this 44' four-passenger mahogany runabout in 1916. She, too, was built at the Ramaley yard. Powered by a 600hp V-12 Van Blerck engine, this speed wagon was capable of 40mph.



Outboards quickly became the healthiest sector of boating, arterially fed by many experimenting designers. Power increased rapidly and for ten years this is where most new money was made in the boat game.

I found myself in on these developments, laying down a new high speed boat of some kind every month, paying out of my own pocket for side experiments I fed into workable improvements in designing larger, and faster, motorboats. I had "paid my dues" as an apprentice and had discovered a lot of behavioral anomalies to which I wanted answers. Within two years I found my boats competing in Gold Cup races against the work of John Hacker and George Croch. Halcyon days, to be sure!

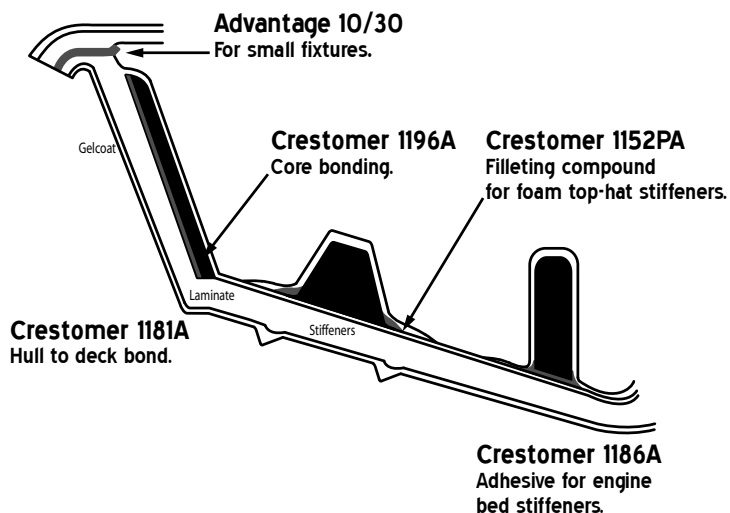
(To Be Continued)

Weston Farmer had been an active naval architect and marine engineer since his days as an apprentice in Jean Ramaley's boatshop. In 50,000 hours before the drawing board in 22 yards on both coasts, he had designed everything from fast launches to Elco cruisers to large diesel yachts. "Halcyon Days" will continue next issue with a look at the men and the machinations of a typical '20s boatbuilding operation.

The hydroplane idea reaches the Maine coast



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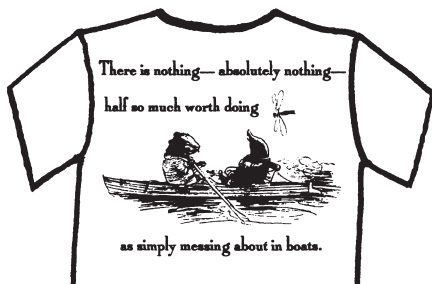
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## Accidental Boatbuilder - 2 Pilot House

By Jeff McFadden

As the years have gone by we have evolved toward somewhat larger and more powerful boats. It's not that we want to go fast and impress the ladies, Gloria is noticeably uninterested in impressing the ladies, but just that we want to take other people out and share our wonderful river with them. It's difficult to explain to any rational person just how forgotten the Missouri River is by the people who live along it. Our *Little Brown Lowe*, 16' x 4-1/2' with a dressed-up john boat hull and a brutally rude and noisy Evinrude 28hp outboard was all right for we two, although the buzz and rattle got pretty tiresome, but put another couple in there with us and the poor little rig grunted and plowed something fierce before the whole shootin' match got up on plane. And even if it was just we two, the nasty, noisy thing would give us a pretty good headache if we chose to go upriver 30 or 40 miles to visit the neighbors.

In this part of the country most small boats, in fact nearly all small boats, are open boats. It had never occurred to us that we didn't absolutely have to sit out in the blazing sun, hang on to our floppy straw hats to blast around at even 10-15mph, and explain to the dermatologist once or twice every year that yes, we understand that the sun's not good for my old face and yes, go ahead and cut another chunk off, thank you very much. Simply put, it never occurred to us that we could get a modest boat with a pilot house and get ourselves into shade, blessed shade.

As I think back on those days, just a few years ago, it is amazing to realize that I had never yet heard of Philip C. Bolger, never heard of Suzanne Altenberger, never heard of Dave Gerr, and had never heard of *Messing About in Boats* (although I'd spent much of my adult life messing about in boats, lower case). I was certain, absolutely certain, that aluminum was the best thing on earth to build a boat out of, that fiberglass was second, and that wood was next to worthless.

In some sense the turnaround in my life is all Dave Gerr's doing. He wrote *The Nature of Boats* and opened my eyes. I have to carry my copy carefully if I take it out of the house. I don't want to lose any of the pages. And here was this obviously knowledgeable man saying, "My personal favorite boatbuilding material is wood," and backing it up with an entire chapter entitled, "Believe it or Not, Wood is Best."

In another sense it's the Coast Guard's doing. Under Coast Guard regulations no welding on any aluminum boat used to carry passengers can be done by other than a certified welder. I'm a certifiable welder, perhaps, a barnyard welder for sure, but I'm in no danger of ever becoming a certified welder. The more I thought about having a tour or charter boat on the Missouri River, the more times I turned back to Dave Gerr's chapter on wood.

Somewhere during this process it soaked in through my nearly impermeable skull that people, actual human people who didn't live in factories, had built, could build, and in fact were even at that moment building boats. I'm fairly handy with this and that and if people could build boats, well, I'm a people.


But all that was still in the future when time came to replace the *Little Brown Lowe*. I had a few bucks in my pocket, enough to buy a boat if I was reasonable and lucky, and started browsing the want ads. In not too many days I found an ad for an 18' john boat with a "factory cabin." Hmmm. Cabin. So I called, I went, a few thousand dollars changed hands and I was the proud owner of a 30-year-old Monark utility boat not terribly unlike the boats that the Coast Guard, Corps, and companies and some river researchers used. Well, older, of course, and more battered, and actually not quite as big or comfy, either, but the basic idea was intact. The "cabin," which I prefer to call a pilot house, was enclosed on three sides, open aft. She has a little cockpit forward of the cabin, a bigger one aft, and is plenty enclosed to be comfortable over a long season.

We fell in love instantly. She brought to mind a little square river tug, and in recognition of her looks and dim recollection of an old movie we named her *Tugboat Annie*. Riding 70 horses, *Annie* was faster than we needed but she had plenty of power to get up on her feet with two couples on board and could loaf along at half or three-quarters throttle and not be nearly as loud as the old 28.

She didn't even cost much more to feed than the old 28, just because that poor little thing had to work so hard. And for the first time in our lives we could go out on the river in broad daylight on a brutal Missouri July day and still have fun, be comfortable, sheltered from the sun, poking along with a breeze off the river blowing in through the open front door. Early in spring and late in autumn found us still on the river, comfortably sheltered from the cold wind, unconcerned if it might rain.

*Annie*, when we bought her, had been rigged out as a little floating camper and we dreamed of spending nights on the river. The little floating camper seemed like a good idea but it fell just short of working, just short of providing a minimum of usable space for people and stuff. An idea had been planted in our minds, though, and from such things are futures built. But that's another story.

(To Be Continued)



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I read Jim Michalak's article on stability tests of one of Bolger's sailing scows in *MAIB*. I found it interesting and reading it set me to thinking about scows in general. The scow shape has considerable merit for its cubic content alone. It is very stable and very safe at sea. It provides the most boat for the material of any possible shape. The scow's only vice is pounding in certain wave conditions, and the bigger power scows I've seen in Alaska and off the West Coast have rounded bows and rounded entries in order to alleviate that problem. Certainly the power scows used for fishing off the coast of Alaska are some of the most seaworthy vessels that have ever been built.

I have built in wood since the late '40s and my first serious vessel was, in fact, a scow shape, built at a tender age in upstate New York using a picture out of a Pogo cartoon for a plan. With the passing of time I became a bit more sophisticated and eventually started building rowing peapods and dories and, in fact, eventually wrote a book on building dories in 1975, long out of print. After graduating from college, taking a teaching job, and moving to the back side of a lake on Kodiak Island off the coast of Alaska, we found a need for a utility scow to move fuel and supplies back and forth across the lake since there was no road to where I had built my house. Any excuse to build yet another boat is usually acted upon, an apparently not-so-rare malady among the boat builders I have known.

I found a couple of thick driftwood planks that were about 20" wide and used them to fashion a 23' long by 8' wide scow that my nearest neighbor caulked with rolled cotton. We mounted a little 5hp Seagull engine on the back of that scow and were surprised with how much weight that vessel would carry and by how easily it moved through the water.

Eventually I realized that scows were essentially dories with their ends cut off. Along about that time we had another daughter and it wasn't long before Melissa was five years old and wanting to get around to other parts of the lake to see some of her little friends. Old habits die hard and I found myself building her a rowing scow about 7' long by about 42" wide. It was made out of local spruce with wide side planks, a 1/2" plywood bottom bent over 2"x3"s nailed between the sides and floor boards to keep her feet out of the bilge water. The center seat was a loose plank that could be used for rowing in the seated position or removed for rowing in the standing position, which is de rigeur in coastal Alaska.

Melissa soon learned to row in either position, although she still prefers to stand and face forward. We painted her little scow bright red so it could be more easily seen from our perch on a cliff and because red is the most durable and longest lasting of all of the oil stains. As long as Melissa and her little brother wore their life jackets we didn't worry as they explored the little coves, shallow lagoons, and secret inlets during the six months of open water. The vessel moved easily but obviously high-end speed was limited because of the short W/L length.

Still, the little red scow wasn't that much slower than some of the rowing dories we had tied to our dock. Because it had less area open to the rain-filled sky, the little red scow was quicker to bail out than the funnel-shaped dories. Because the scow was very

## Small Scows in Both Wood & Aluminum

By Mark White

efficient in the way it enclosed cubic content it was lighter and far less expensive to build than a longer, more streamlined vessel would have been.

The little red scow moved so easily that some adults started borrowing, rowing it around when it wasn't locked or chained to a dock on the public side of the lake. I have seen as many as seven adults aboard at any one time and curiously never saw it tip over, even though many of the passengers were standing and obviously inebriated. Almost 30 years have passed since that time and the little red scow is still being rowed across that lake, but it is now obvious that its remaining days are limited.

A few years after the little red scow came another, slightly bigger and also red. This one utilized more than a single sheet of plywood for the bottom and measured about 10' long by a touch over 4' in width. Construction was similar to the first, except that I used fungicidal bedding compound in all the joints, which I believe aided longevity. A couple from Switzerland moved into the lake house shortly thereafter and they mostly rowed the vessel from a comfortable podium seat with a footrest that I nailed to the floorboards in the center. Eventually they mounted an outboard on the stern, which changed the nature of travel back and forth across the lake. With the powerful outboard came the ability to break through the skim ice that formed on the surface of the lake in the fall, and the newfound knowledge that a thin layer of ice will quickly (within 100 yards) cut a soft wooden boat apart at the waterline unless it is sheathed in metal or fiberglass.

In 1969 I witnessed one of the first 20' aluminum power skiffs being built for the Alaskan salmon fishery. This vessel was assembled using a typical box frame for a double floor, combined with ribs and developed lines, out of 1/4" aluminum plate. It was built much like a wooden boat would have been, which turned out to be a mistake for both production and longevity. It was powered with a 45hp diesel and quickly developed fatigue cracks in the bottom in between framing members. I worked the following summer on that same vessel, repairing problems associated with construction details that hadn't yet been properly worked out. It wasn't until later that we learned that frames in an aluminum vessel could sometimes be counter-productive. In the few years that followed, subsequent aluminum power skiffs forced vessels built of other materials totally out of the work field since they were lighter, tougher, and more durable than anything that had ever been used in the industry before. They would take punishment for years that would destroy wood or fiberglass vessels in minutes.

In the early '70s I bought a cheap 10' aluminum Jon boat from the Sears catalog and mounted runners and an 8hp airboat engine to the stern. On ice it went about 30mph and in water and broken ice about 3mph. Steering was kind of a general thing and winds with gusts over 60 made aiming for the takeout an iffy proposition. It worked pretty well during break up and freeze up but

wasn't particularly comfortable during the coldest part of the winter. It hauled kids and groceries and dogs back and forth across the lake for about two years. The kids didn't like the noise but they really liked the speed as the thing clattered and rocketed across the ice. That made their eyes light up and thrilled them greatly.

The Jon boat never did row well and eventually the air prop ate the bottom front half of a new wool halibut shirt I was wearing. It happened very quickly, with a rapid ripping sound. I was glad that wool isn't very strong and that the prop didn't pull me through the wire guard screen as well. That was the beginning of the end and I eventually stored the motor in the attic of my shop, where it still sits today, an interesting experiment in mobility.

The repairs to the ice-damaged wooden scow (they called it the Red Box) led me towards playing with aluminum plate and to eventually understanding how useful vessels could be built from that material. While lacking greatly in aesthetic appeal, aluminum does have features related to longevity that wood lacks. After hours of messing with small, thin pieces of cardboard, tape, and glue (at 1 1/1"), I learned that bent aluminum plate construction (using alloy 5086 and 6061) was relatively fast to build with, quite strong, amazingly light, and surprisingly fair. The monocoque aluminum construction method was certainly much faster to build than wood construction. Aluminum was and is relatively impervious to the effects of rain, sun, thin ice, and rot. After building a few 20' V-bottomed aluminum outboard skiffs, I eventually went back to rowboats, sailboats, and scows.

About ten years ago I built two metal scows for my two youngest sons. I used 5086, 3/16" thick aluminum plate for the first hull (16'x9'x3') in Alaska, and 1/8" 6061 plate for the second hull (13'x8'x3') in Alabama. The boats are a little like the San Francisco Sailing Pelican, but wider, deeper, uglier, noisier, and surprisingly faster. The shapes of the plates in the first hull were developed by welding on attachment points at the ends of each cut plate and pulling them into fair curves with inexpensive wire winches. The plates were laid out, marked with a felt tip marker, and then cut with a Skilsaw, using a carbide-tipped blade and a little spray lubricant. While the bottom and sides were laid out with battens and scaled drawings, the ends and decks were pre-curved with the winches and laid against the pieces that were already assembled, so they could be marked in place. They were marked, carefully checked for symmetry, and then cut to fit.

By the way, I have used the same wire and winch technique to bend wooden kayak gunwales and other boat parts, again getting beautifully fair curves with very little effort and no lofting. Only steel cable or Spectra are stable enough that a curve bent into wood, steel, or aluminum remains the same day after day. Using rope or line for this sort of thing would be a mistake since it changes in length with humidity and temperature. Bending boatbuilding materials with wire winches is a useful technique that needs to be explored further and used more regularly.

The cutting is noisy and the chips are very sharp, so while it is necessary to use protective gear and a full face mask, the cutting and building process is remarkably fast and efficient. The edges are easily tacked

with short welds and then adjusted to make good corner-to-corner fits. Leather clothing is useful to prevent burns from hot little flying balls of molten aluminum, an unfortunate byproduct of the MIG welding process. If you weld aluminum you are going to eventually get burned with these tiny balls of hot metal, so it is best to sit back and enjoy the pain. I keep an aloe plant in the kitchen and squeeze the juice out of a very small piece onto the burn. It works better than anything found in a bottle or tube. Some welders use ear plugs, since a tiny, red-hot ball of molten aluminum will quickly burn right through an ear drum if one is welding overhead (which we try to avoid). It never happened to me, but I am told that it hurts like hell and the resulting inner ear infection is difficult and painful to deal with.

A MIG welder works best if the machine is placed above the work and used with a fairly short, straight, 6' lead, since the aluminum wire is normally forced through a long, thin tube before it runs out the tip and can be liquefied to bond with the area to be welded. Aluminum wire is not very stiff and it easily kinks and will fail to feed at the least provocation. I have tried spool guns and push/pull systems, yet the simple commercial setup with a big spool in the machine works as well as anything. More time is normally spent cleaning and fussing with the tip and lead liner than actually welding, yet the MIG process is still fast and efficient. A \$10,000 welder doesn't really work all that much better than one that costs \$400, in my experience. Both are imperfect at best and much time will be spent trying to clean tips, clearing jams, and breathing toxic fumes.

Having a welder placed above the work will ease the movement of the wire down through the tube (gravity helps, even here) and keeping the tube straight will facilitate ease of movement of the all important soft aluminum wire, which will range from .035" to .045" in diameter. There is zinc in most filler or parent metals and this creates toxic fumes. Still, one should try to do most of one's welding in a relatively windless environment so that the precious pocket of pressurized argon gas protects the molten metal weld puddle from contamination by nitrogen gas in the atmosphere until it cools enough to become firm. In truth, the fumes usually go straight up into the air, impelled by the heat of the process. In the open air those fumes will waft away. In a closed room those noxious fumes will build up.

Aluminum plate is floppy until it is bent, at which point it becomes very rigid. A plate of normal thickness will only bend in one direction. A plate achieves great rigidity by being bent, so a curvy, burdensome vessel will be far more rigid than a longer one with relatively flat planes. Sharper curves are stronger and this process will make a very rigid vessel, without frames. A mistake can be made by trying to make aluminum plate do what is customary in wood. Aluminum bends far more easily than wood, is considerably stronger, and it achieves much of its great strength by being bent and/or creased. It is hard to fasten wood at the ends and a wooden joint is often not all that it should be. Aluminum can be welded permanently at all joints, however, the welded section or portion should be a little heavier than the thickness of the plates or it could eventually crack from flexure. Many rail at the cheap aluminum Jon boats because they have a limit-

ed life. If they were built with thicker metal instead of thin aluminum roofing material they would hold up quite well, but few in the industry do this.

While a welded joint in steel can be of the same thickness as the steel plate, a welded joint in aluminum does need to be thicker in order to be of similar strength. Looking at joints in steel bicycles can back this information up, since welds on steel tubing are quite thin. Joints in aluminum bicycles show a thickness often twice that of the walls of the aluminum tubing that the welds hold together. Welds on bicycles are often made with TIG (Tungsten, Inert Gas) welders, which are slower and very precise.

While boats can be welded with TIG welders, a MIG (Metal, Inert Gas) wire machine is much more efficient and productive because it automatically feeds wire filler material into the welded joint. It is said that the MIG process is the easiest for a novice to learn. A cheap MIG welder for aluminum costs about \$400, with another \$100 to rent an argon tank for a month.

As an aside, I notice that sheets or rolls of heavy gage thermoplastic are becoming available on the market, and it would be interesting to play with welding small rowboats out of those materials with plastic filler rod and an air heat gun. Thicknesses available range from 1/8" to 3/8", with 1/4" being most common. The plastic cuts like a dream compared to aluminum and welds well enough that many dumpsters and fuel tanks are currently being made from it.

Initial cutting and assembly goes very fast with aluminum. Tom Emerson (a past master at building boats in aluminum) and I cut, tacked, and assembled the sides and bottom of the first 16' sailing scow hull in a little over an hour. Fitting ends, decks, coaming, etc., by myself took many, many days, but this was still faster than the process would have been in wood.

It is nice to try to buy aluminum plate in the length and width needed for a job. Joining plates at mid-span can be done, but it is never a rewarding experience. Welding aluminum plates at their edges often results in little distortion. Welding an aluminum plate in the middle will warp, pucker, and pull the surface to a considerable degree. It is best not to grind or sand an aluminum plate in the middle since corrosion will make a mess of any attempt to clean a surface up. It was possible to get plates as long as 24' in Seattle and Kodiak, while we were hard-pressed to get them 12' long in Birmingham, Alabama. Larger aluminum plates are more available in areas that are known for shipbuilding, or where such plates are used for tanks for pulp or agriculture. Angles and tubes are often available in 6061, while plate is available in 6061 or 5086.

The alloy 5086 is designed for use in a corrosive, marine environment and welds very well, as does 6061. There are other, stronger alloys (such as 7075) that do not weld very well at all. Alloy 7075 may weld OK but it will often crack right near where it was welded the next day, so beware. While steel melts at 2,700 degrees F, aluminum will melt around 900 degrees. That is below red heat so it is really hard to use visible heat as a guide to see what the metal is doing, unlike with steel.

The aluminum boat building industry is very strong on the West Coast and specialized extrusions are available there that make

life much easier for today's aluminum boat-builder. Where before we had to use a Skil or table saw to split lengths of 211 aluminum pipe, we can now get 3/16" wall half sections of 2" and 2-1/2" pipe, U-shaped hull stiffener and I-sections that come in full 20' and 40' lengths.

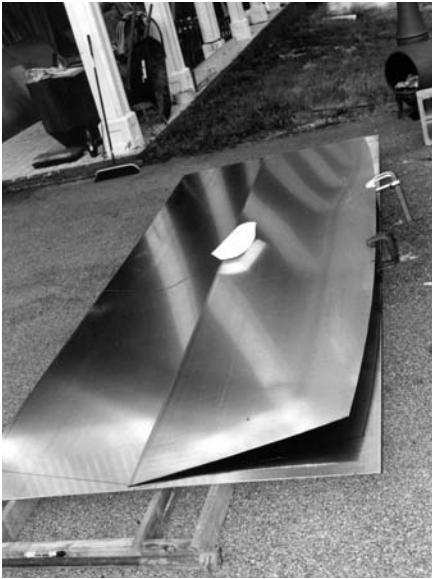
The aluminum welding process is faster and more versatile than working with wood, plywood, glue, nails, and fiberglass. A 9' plywood punt took me about 60 hours to build and glass, while a similar punt in aluminum took about seven hours. The finished product in aluminum is surprisingly light and rigid, especially considering the lack of frames. Aluminum is cold and slick to stand on (especially in Alaskan waters) so I added aluminum floor frames and put in a painted MDO plywood floor to stand on. The floor is screwed to the frames, which are on 16" centers. Structurally the sides of the vessel are incredibly strong edgewise. Crosswise floor frames transfer that great strength into the center of the floor. Although it is tempting to weld the floor supports directly into the sides of the hull, this is to be discouraged in motorized vessels because they tend to flex and crack if tied directly into the side plates.

In sailing hull #2 I had sections of plates broken into angles, which were triangles lightly tacked to the bottom. The bottom is more deeply curved than the floorboards and the angles were sheared to be wider and deeper near the center of the bottom so the curve of the plywood floor is more gentle than that of the bottom. This arrangement helps prevent "oil canning," and a load placed on the floor is more evenly distributed through the cross pieces tacked to the bottom. The deck is high enough off the floor that it was worth building an aluminum ladder to facilitate relatively graceful movement up and down. Ladders are vastly underrated tools and should be used more frequently in vessels that visit remote beaches and ledges. In the stern we simply stand on the heavy shaft for the steering wheel and this gives us the first step up towards the dock at that point. A ladder off the bow would be a very good idea for graceful landing on a beach.

The bottom gets its strength from the fact that it is curved and welded to the curves of the sides and from some simple cross beams lightly tacked in place. The sides, in turn, are welded to a deeply curved deck and to the bow and stern transoms. No plate in the entire hull is allowed to be flat, since that would seriously detract from its strength. Working from the bottom up, it is clear that the sides hold the curves in the bottom while the deck holds the curves into the sides, bow, and transom at the top. Even the deck needs support, which it gets from the almost vertical coaming by being welded to it. The only place where cross frames are used is in the bottom, and here they are used to support the floor.

The bottom of the vessel rides about 5" clear of the water at the bow and almost even with the water at the stern. This seems to be an efficient arrangement, although it would be nice to ride alongside the vessel while it is underway to see if future changes should be made in later versions. In a hull designed to plane, the run aft would be either straight or hooked slightly downward. Such a hull will, of course, suck water in the displacement mode so one designs either a sailing, rowing, or displacement hull that pulls its bottom back out of the water, or a power hull





Here are the 5'x12'x1/8" sheets, prior to cutting the bottom. Bottom and sides have similar edge profiles. Indelible marker is used to define cut lines.



Cardboard model of boat (1/24th scale) rests on plates.



Bow is used to define some of the curves. A piece of straight pine or a piece of brass is useful as a batten.



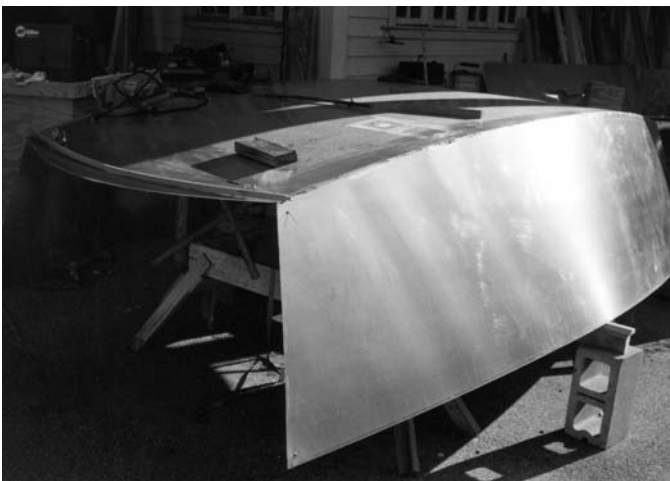
Improvised jig is set up plumb and level to hold bottom plate in position. I prefer to have the bottom relatively high so I don't have to stoop saving the back.

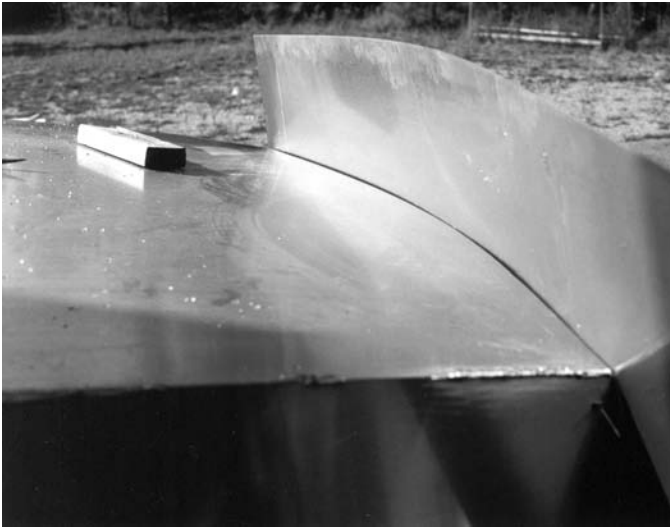
Sides tacked to bottom with tiny welds. Note temporary support for side. Since there is no framework, it is imperative that both sides and angles remain symmetrical and that the bottom remains level while the initial fastening is taking place.



Another view of the temporary jig with plate tacked to it.

View of side and bottom from another perspective.





Note how aft plate (transom) fits against bottom. A marker will be used to set cut lines. The initial assembly is efficient and fast, but one must take care to avoid asymmetry.



View of MIG torch and tools. Always tack first. Weld solidly after entire assembly is in place.



Soot from welding process. The fumes are hard on the lungs. Grinding and sanding will clean up edges

Aft view. Ends have not been trimmed yet. Note that wire winches are still in place. They must stay until the decks are welded in.



Vessel has been flipped upright. All seams will be welded inside as well as out.

Deck and coamings on, beginning to look like a boat.





designed with a straight or slightly hooked run aft that rides on top of the water. It is difficult to have it both ways and very few AC/DC designs have been successful in this regard.

For those who want to experiment with scows, I can think of no better place to start than with an up or down scale of Bolger's rendition of an old French punt from *Thirty Odd Boats*. A look at the sailing scows out of Chapelle's *American Small Sailing Craft* will provide some insight into rigs, but one is advised to use leeboards or symmetrical dagger boards and twin rudders to keep something in the water during heavy breezes. It is very easy to get rocker by slanting the sides rather than cutting material away. The racing scows on the Great Lakes are very fast and they can also be built in aluminum, using quarter sections of 6" aluminum plate at the chines. One must remember that a totally flat plate will lack rigidity, hence every component must be bent or curved in order to remain strong. Cutting is fairly easy with a Skil saw, although one must wear protective gear to keep the razor-sharp chips out of one's eyes.

The bigger 16' sailing scow hull has a VERY heavy mast (made from two sections of hull stiffener welded edge-to-edge) that rises 21' off the deck and carries about 220sf of gaff-rigged sail. The pivoting mast is guyed with four heavy stainless wire shrouds, which has worked very well. The 16' vessel is very large for its length and is almost big enough to be fitted with a cabin. I chose twin rudders because I wanted maneuverability on either side when the vessel was heeled over. Ultimately the rudders were extended in length and cavitation plates were added on the bottom to get a better grip.

The twin rudders are turned with a 34" diameter aluminum wheel in the stern. Even though the vessels are relatively short, they have a "big" feel that the children seem to enjoy. The wheel is attached to a heavy aluminum pipe, around which two pieces of braided nylon line are wound. The line pulls short tillers on the paired rudders, but they could have been attached to the outboard

ends of the rudders just as easily. The rudders have to have a tie rod linking the two, regardless of whether they are controlled from the inside or the outside. The wheel steering works extremely well and was a very successful, rewarding part of the project. Twin rudders beat a single one in the center, and I noticed that the high end mono and cat ocean racers have also adopted them, splayed out to the sides.

I got nervous about stability after the first ride in a 30-knot breeze with 220sf of sail, and added a 2'x6', foil-shaped aluminum dagger board with a 400lb. lead-filled bottom wing. That lump of lead stiffened things up considerably. I should have filled the bottom of the dagger board with molten lead instead of making the wing. I added protective skegs with the first rudders on the 16' hull but they greatly slowed the ability to turn (dumb idea) so I did not build skegs for the second hull. SV#1 (the 16-footer) is very responsive to the wheel and steering is very precise. The rudders in the second hull are long, narrow boards of treated wood and they can be pulled up for beaching or dropped as deep as necessary while traveling. The dagger board is also long and deep and can be pulled out before nearing shoal water. The smaller vessel draws about 3" with the boards up.

Stability on the larger hull is much better than I ever expected with the weighted board down. In a dockside experiment it took Tom and I and two other strong men to pull the boat over on its side with a line to the masthead. Even then the vessel did not even come close to shipping water and wanted to pop back up with considerable force. I did not expect the curve of hull stability to be smooth with a flat-bottomed vessel, but it was surprisingly so. When we let go the hull stood up quickly with the water dampening the effect.

The smaller hull has no ballast and only weighs about 200lbs. It easily holds six adults and is very rigid. I continue to be surprised with the light weight and strength of welded aluminum construction. It should be mentioned that these vessels are in a different class than the thin, painted aluminum Jon boats sold at Sears and Sam's for \$129. These handcrafted vessels are designed to last for hundreds of years and are not built with aluminum in order to save money. The down side of aluminum is that the touch is either unpleasantly hot or cold and that it smears gray on anything that it comes in contact with. The shiny aluminum plate glares strongly in bright sunlight. Aluminum does not hold paint well and I have not seen many painted aluminum vessels that looked good for more than a week.

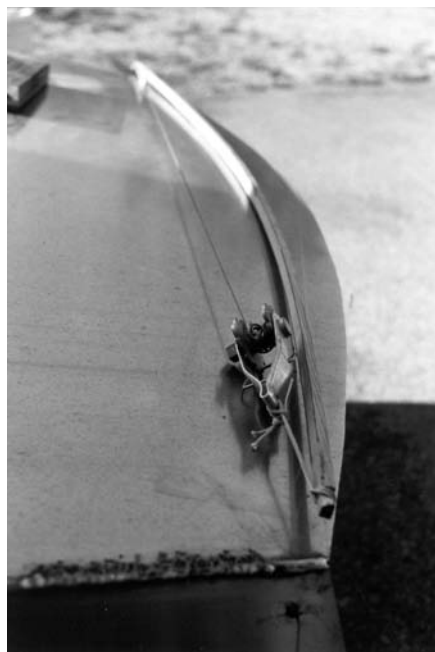
A future project is to design a short, fat cruising scow. A 30'x16' hull that had 5' or even 6' wide sides would make a very compact, powerful, flat-bottomed cruiser with a tremendous amount of internal room. Such a vessel could draw as little as 5" of water and go along fairly well in protected waters. We used the 16' boat off Kodiak, Alaska, a little, but I would be more comfortable with a shorter, lighter mast and less sail area in open water and stiffer breezes. By the way, we did tie in bulky flotation logs to keep the vessel on the surface in the event of a capsize since aluminum (at 168lbs/cf) has absolutely no reserve buoyancy.

Incidentally, a benefit of having a vessel shorter than 16' is that it doesn't have to be

registered, numbered, regulated (and taxed) in many states. And a sail or motor scow that is 16' long still has a great deal of cubic content.

I have been surprised by the speed of construction and the fairness of the curves attained by warping or pulling aluminum plates into curved shapes with winches. For the second hull, again made from soft 6061, 1/8" thick plate, I used surplus galvanized 1/16" wire cable and very cheap (\$2 each) fence winches. I drilled 1/8" holes in the plate corners and tied figure-eight knots in the wire to fasten it in the holes. Plugging the holes with weld was easily accomplished later, after the joints were formed and welded and after the vessel's shape was permanently established. It is really useful to make cardboard models in order to get the hang of building without frames and a set of lines. This winter I will probably build a small 12'x7 Jon boat that will take a small outboard. That vessel will have about 2' wide sides, no thwarts, no decks, and movable seats.

View of first 16'x9' hull in waters near Kodiak, Alaska. All three sons are in one place at one time, a very rare occurrence. Mast is positioned 2' left of centerline in order to miss dagger board, which rises up 6' from bottom. Part of the ladder in the bow is visible in the extreme lower right.

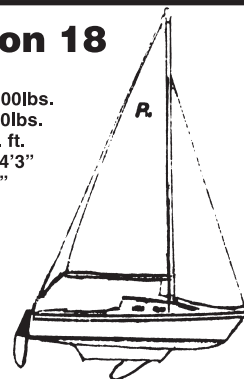


Cheap wire winch used to bend bow.

## Precision 18

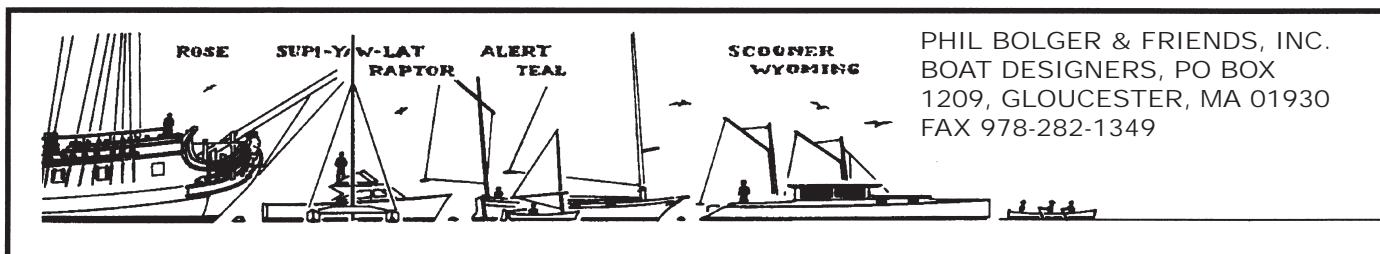
Displacement 1100lbs.  
Ballast, Lead, 350lbs.  
Sail Area 145 sq. ft.  
Draft, Bd. Down 4'3"  
Draft, Bd. Up 1'6"  
LOA 17'5"  
LWL 15'5"  
Beam 7'5"

15' C.B.  
16- B.K.  
18' - 21' - 23'



## FERNALD'S MARINE

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(978) 465-0312



PHIL BOLGER & FRIENDS, INC.  
BOAT DESIGNERS, PO BOX  
1209, GLOUCESTER, MA 01930  
FAX 978-282-1349

The original Micro design dates back to the early 1980s. It was made to the wish list of a man well along in years and not in very good health who wanted an unstrenuous day-sailer for Tampa Bay in Florida with a cuddy in which to take shelter from the daily afternoon thunderstorm. Quite a few people liked it and some of them did ambitious cruises with them; the first photo was taken from one on her way from the coast of Africa to the Cape Verde Islands, marked by her skipper, "I'm sure Micro can cross oceans."



One with ambitions proposed to circumnavigate Australia. For him we designed the Micro Navigator with the triple objects of making a reasonably comfortable cabin for long periods on board, shelter from sun and spray for long periods underway (very short boats take a long time to cover long distances), and still faster self-righting in a heavy weather knockdown. We published the Navigator modification drawing in *MAIB*, January 1, 1999, Vol. 16, No. 16 (second drawing). Besides the added deckhouse we showed her with our "Chinese Gaffer" rig which allowed more sail area on a shorter mast and all the sail controls brought indoors. One builder of this version is Bruce Hallman of Pacifica, California, who writes:

"The photo showing the sail was taken in near dead calm. As you will notice, the battens are too stiff and I intend to taper the forward half of them in the near future to achieve more draft in the sail. You also will see that I used crude sailcloth, white polytarp. I had intended to try that first and upgrade to real Dacron™ as needed. Well, with a couple of tryouts I am not convinced

## Bolger on Design

### Micro Navigator Update

#### Design #422

15'4" x 6'0" x 1'9", 203sf Sail Area,  
1,650lbs. Designed Displacement

that Dacron™ is truly needed. The polytarp works pretty good and the stresses on the cloth seem quite low. The battens are attached with adhesive backed Velcro™ with a few lashings through the cloth.

"Indeed, I made a sport of building the boat frugally, spending less than \$1,200 on the boat plus about 600 man-hours spread out loosely in spare time over a two-year period. (trailer and motor costs extra).



"The fact that the hull speed of the boat is easily overwhelmed by the tidal currents in San Francisco Bay, tacking upwind for sport isn't what I feel compelled to do. The hull does make windward progress. I had a fun upwind leg from the San Francisco waterfront across the Bay to Sausalito under the famous San Francisco westerly.

"One wet trip was taken under motor power, heading straight into the wind, under Golden Gate Bridge so I could reach back to San Francisco with maybe 15 knots, a swell and chop. Quite fun, though again the hull speed is such that essentially everybody passes us (although they look cold and wet and we are warm, sitting on our upholstered and pillowed sofa berths).

"To achieve a neutral helm in this broad reach required the mizzen to be fully loose. I am not sure if this is what you intended. (I did add an 8" end plate to my rudder.) Indeed the only situation where I found the need to sheet in the mizzen all the way was when I wanted to point the bow to the wind, "hove to" if I am using the term correctly.

"Once, when overpowered by a gust and too much sail up, the boat heeled strong-

ly and then turned up into the wind harmlessly. I am happy with the ability to reef the sail from inside the cabin.

"My rough calculation of the displacement of the boat, fully loaded with gear but without crew (based on the designed waterline in the photo at the dock), is about 2,100 pounds including a pair of golf cart batteries.

"I was able to acquire an older 9.9hp 4-stroke long shaft outboard, which is too powerful and the long shaft is unnecessary, but I liked the price.

"I am very happy with the boat overall, though as you are probably curious, I will describe two problems as I see them. I have my eyes wide open about the necessary compromises to achieve the near miracle of a cruiser cabin in a 15'4" hull!

"One problem is that it makes close quarters work at the dock and the boat ramp much trickier than it would be with an open cockpit, especially single-handed. The over-size motor makes this worse, either off or near full speed as the only options. My favorite boat ramp is tucked on the west side in a narrow blind alley north-south channel with a high decrepit dock on the east with predominately strong westerly winds. I am too scared to try my yuloh in this situation. Also, the next time I am going to have an anchor ready for quick release from the stern (as opposed to from the bow hatch).

"Also, at least to the limits of my imagination, the complication of the geometry of the gaff, boom, and batten jaws when tipping the mast down is trouble. I am skeptical that a tabernacled swing down would be a quick and easy operation because the jaws would bind and be required to be untied from the mast. Once untied, the six lines running up the mast, drooping now horizontally, get easily tangled up. In short, I haven't figured a way to lower the mast without removing the boom/gaff/sail package from the mast and causing a time consuming tangle. Perhaps more clever jaws could be devised to help or, as is my goal, to keep the boat in a slip in a marina (I am currently waitlisted).

"A third problem (if you could call it that) is that at the dock and boat ramp this odd boat gathers a crowd of spectators. All have been polite but they are persistent and want to talk, no problem really, except that the queue never ends.





# Standard Micro

The image contains three technical drawings of the Standard Micro sailboat. The top drawing is a side profile view showing the boat's hull, a dark-colored keel, and two sails (mainsail and jib) with diagonal ribbing. The middle drawing is a deck plan view, showing the layout of the deck, including the mast, boom, and various fittings. The bottom drawing is a hull cross-section view, showing the internal structure of the hull, including the keel, ribs, and the placement of the mast and boom.

Micro Navigator

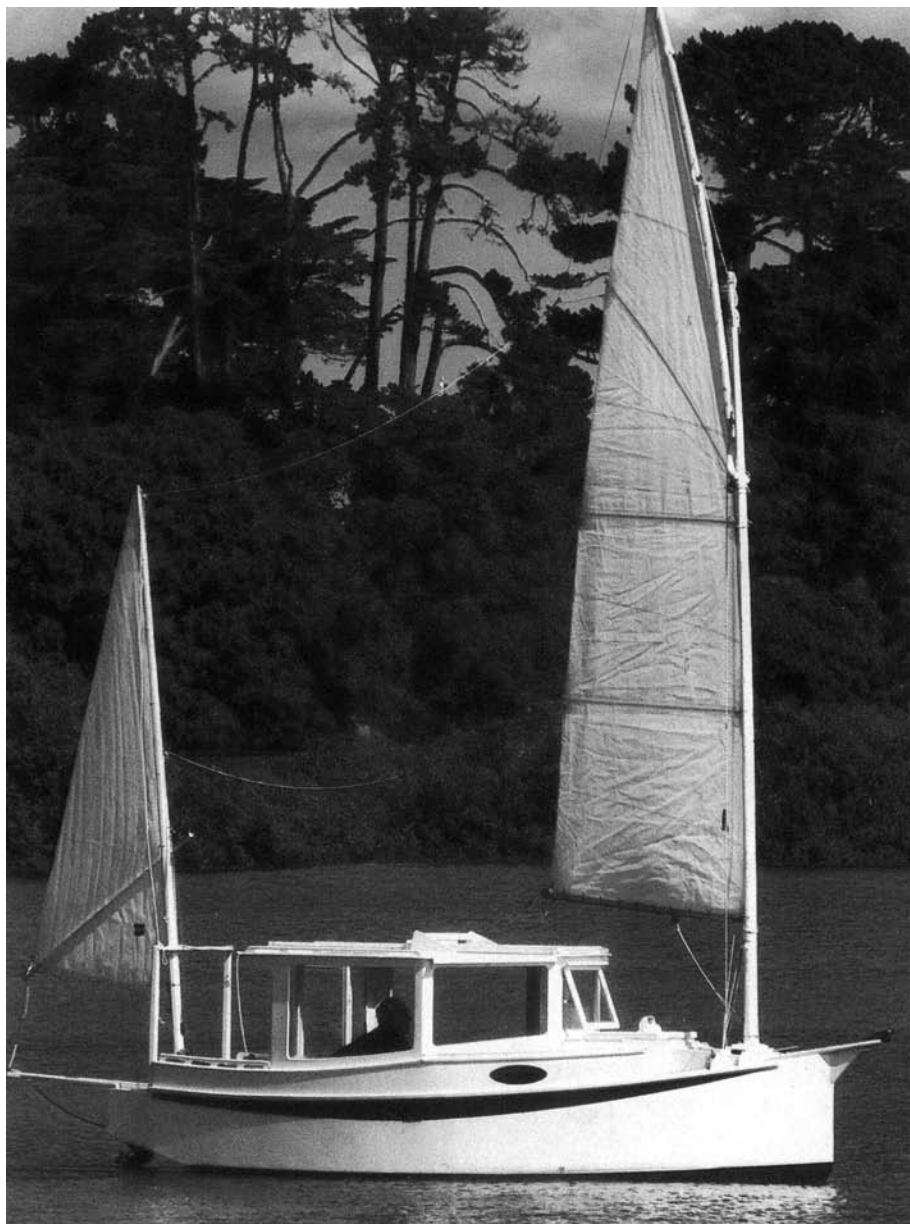
Technical drawing of the Micro Navigator sailboat. The top part is a side view showing the hull, mast, and sails with various dimensions. The bottom part is a plan view showing the boat's layout from above, including the cockpit and cabin.





Bruce Hallman's Micro Navigator.

Don Baldwin's Micro Navigator



"All in all the boat is what I wanted, a small sailboat cruiser with an exceedingly comfortable large bright cabin."

We have a report to much the same effect from Derek Waters in British Columbia, who says his boat made five-and-a-half knots "before it became absolutely necessary to reef." He must have been surfing as that is beyond the theoretical displacement speed of the hull. He also reports too much weather helm and a sleepless night from pounding under the flat forward bottom.

Don Baldwinson in Auckland, New Zealand, put his report on YAHOO under "Bolger - Phil Bolger's Boats." He found a light weather helm, but at the time of writing he had not sailed her in strong winds. He commented that "the glass cabin concept scores very highly with me, maybe even more so in less pleasant conditions or sailing with young kids." In a letter to us he begins, "Very, very pleased."

We had already addressed some of the points raised. We had designed a bow fillet to reduce if not eliminate the noise and vibration there when anchored. Don Baldwinson's boat has this feature and he found it effective, in ripples at night and also underway, "sailing upright into small waves." The fillet reduces the effective lateral plane at the bow, which probably accounts for the lack of strong weather helm in that boat.

We also designed a tabernacled mast-lowering system. It's based on the very successful arrangement in the Long Micro in which the mast pivots outside the bow transom and locks with a long lever that cannot jam. In this design the lever and cheeks of the tabernacle are faired into a soft-nose effect which makes the boat 9" longer than the first Micros, to 16'1". Most people will think the looks are improved over the square bow with climbing steps, and it certainly reduces the effort involved in getting the mast up and down. It also moves the mainmast and sail forward enough to eliminate the over-enthusiastic weather helm.

Included in the plans is a second tabernacle design for the standard Micro without the Navigator house which can, of course, take a much lower tabernacle height and pass through most garage doors for storage. It remains to be seen whether the combination of the no-slap fillet and the more forward mast position will give her lee helm or increased leeway. If so, a small addition to the bottom of the keel forward ought to cure it without much trouble.

As for the problem with the jaws and tangling of the numerous lines, the latter will yield to color-coding and ties placed by experience. The jaws, five in all, do have to come off the mast before it can be lowered, but with toggles or snap hooks on the parrels and some practice, this doesn't have to be a time-consuming affair.

Plans of Micro, our Design #422, including the upgrades and the Navigator option, are available for \$175 to build one boat, sent priority mail, rolled in a tube, from: Phil Bolger & Friends, P.O. Box 1209, Gloucester, MA 01930, U.S.



A small box came to my home a few weeks ago with a *MAIB* return address. Intrigued, I tore it open and found to my surprise a nice note from Bob Hicks with a request to evaluate a sanding block that had been sent to him by the manufacturer. His request was based on my recent article about how much I loved varnishing (and thus sanding). I've done my share of hand sanding and have worked with countless sanding blocks. I have preferred over the years to make my own blocks and have been very happy with their performance.

I've also used some blocks and fairing boards that are commercially available with less than great results and ended up throwing them away in disgust. So I sat down and looked at this block with much built-in skepticism. I forced myself to shake off these negative thoughts and took a good look at the product in front of me. As I studied its design, thoughts of an upcoming project came into my head.

Sanding blocks are by design pretty low tech devices. You can't get any more basic than a chunk of 2"x4" and some stickit paper. The Preppin Weapon actually has a couple of moving parts and appeared to have had some ergonomic engineering involved in the design of the thing. The concept of connecting the sandpaper to the block is elegantly simple and effective. There are two stainless steel levers, one at each end, that operate stainless steel clips to hold the paper in place. The product information guide claims that the unique design of these clips actually tightens the paper as the clamps are closed. I loaded a piece of 220 grit into one end and clamped it down and then when I loaded the other end and clamped it the paper tightened right up as claimed.

## Product Review The Preppin Weapon

By Gary "Luke" Lukoski

This was a pretty good start and now this thing had my attention. I held the loaded block in my hand and it had a really nice feel and heft. The block is made of ABS plastic with a slightly rough surface for grip and, as an added bonus, it is foam cored so it floats in a bucket when wet sanding. I was getting pretty intrigued by this time and I headed out into the shop for the real test.

I've been thinking about revarnishing my Lil Gem skiff for some time now and this new sanding block jumpstarted the program. Of course, in order to revarnish you have to sand the existing finish. The advertising told me to load up with multiple sheets and just tear off the worn out ones as I sanded. I did just that and got to work with some enthusiasm. The comfort that I had first noticed when gripping this tool soon translated into poetry in motion. A firm rubber pad on the bottom of the block has just the right amount of give to provide a smooth stroke and feel for the work. The edges are tapered and you can get into comers easily.

I started burning through the four sheets and it was a pleasure to just rip off the old sheet and keep going without losing much rhythm or time. In short, I was liking this tool very much in just a few minutes of time with it.

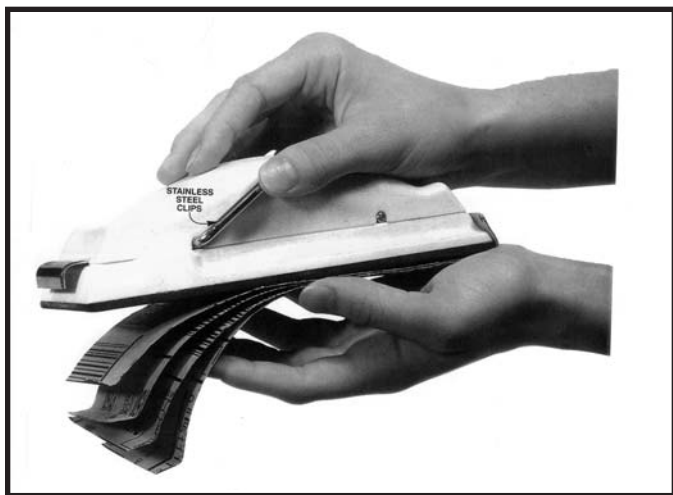
A couple of other things I discovered that had been incorporated into the design were also well thought-out. The block is sized so that it uses an 8"x11" sheet of paper

cut into quarters. The length is just right so that you get enough paper into the clips to hold it but not so much that you are struggling to stuff it in or wasting paper. It comes in four colors and the advertised reason is that the user can load up several blocks with different grits and quickly change blocks as they progress up the grits. This is a nice touch but is probably more practical in a commercial operation where time is money.

Is there anything wrong with the Preppin Weapon? Not much that I could find. The price may be a little steep for some. It is \$20 and I would have had a hard time shelling out my cash for a sanding block without a test drive or at least a good recommendation. The design is pretty compact and will not do the job when fairing large surfaces such as a big topside or bottom job. It is very stiff and will only work on flat or gently contoured surfaces. Of course, you can't get one block to do all things so this is not really a problem with the product.

I didn't get a chance to try it but I think this block would be ideal for wet sanding. I have spent many hours wet sanding high performance sailboats. The final 600 grit wet sand of a Laser bottom or a J-24 keel would have been perfect projects for this sanding block. It is just the right size and the floating aspect would have been very nice indeed.

So are you going to run out and buy one? I'm sure sold on the Preppin Weapon and I'll certainly be using it on future products. I don't know how this company distributes or where it is available. I suspect that it is available in the tool sections of some Home Centers. It is manufactured by Time Shaver Tools, Inc., 1150 W. Briardale #A, Orange, CA 92865, (714) 974-2531, [www.timeshavertools.com](http://www.timeshavertools.com)



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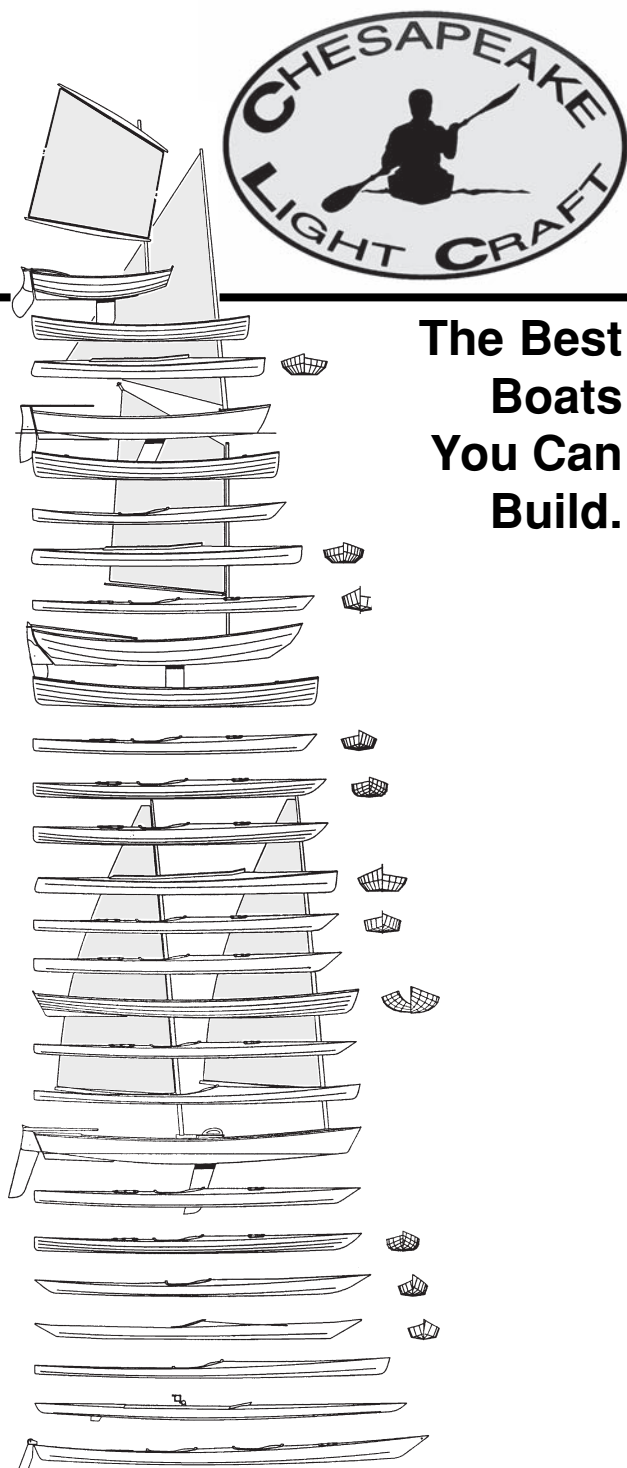
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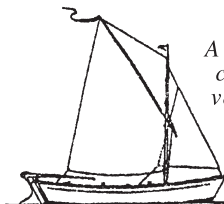
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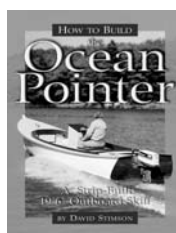
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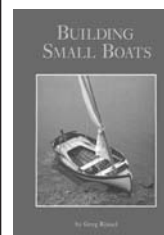


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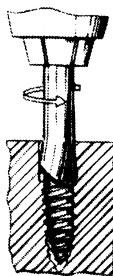
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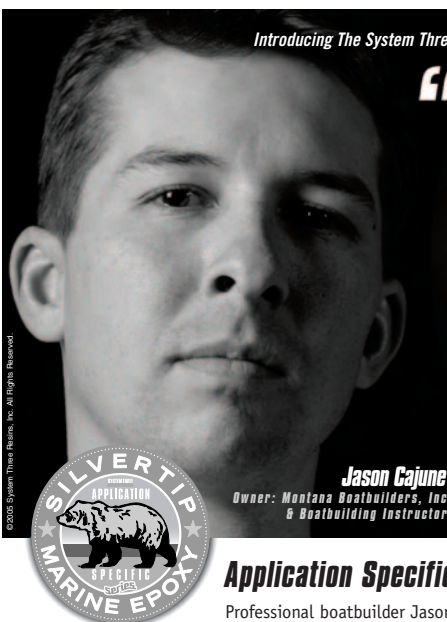
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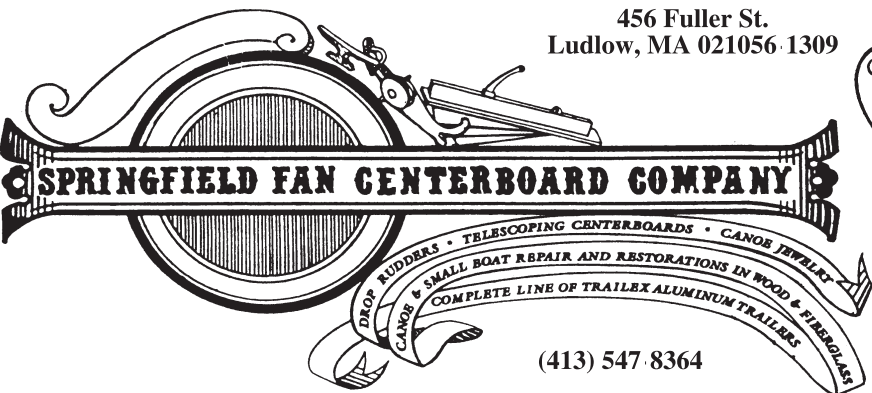
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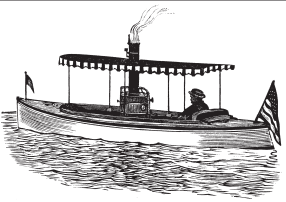
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Ocean Planet, September 14, in a spirit of remembrance, perseverance and solidarity for the tragedies of Sept. 11. Photo by Latitude 38

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**18' Pete Culler Ketch**, oukume lapstrake hull, oak stem bent ribs, Egyptian cotton sails. All natural finish, all gorgeous wood. Full color details at [members.cox.net/Loraluv1](mailto:members.cox.net/Loraluv1). \$7,500.  
VIC FASOLINO, N. Kingstown, RI, (401) 294-7513 (2)

**1890's J. H. Rushton 13' Iowa Pleasure Boat**, beautiful (same as photo after page 124 in Atwood Manley's book *Rushton and His Times in American Canoeing*). Planking, decking, gunwales exc. Bottom 6" of some ribs missing, easy repair. Set into decks are 2 brass pennant holders and unique brass plate reading "J. H. Rushton's Boats & Canoes - Sold by the H & D Folsom Arms Co. 3-14 Broadway, New York." Totally seaworthy. Pictures available. \$5,800. '23 Old-town 20' Guide Special, wood-canvas canoe #73726, CS Grade. Totally seaworthy. Pictures available. \$600. Call anytime or email.  
LEE ROSENTHAL, Wallkill, NY, (845) 895-3137 <[leerosenthal@frontiernet.net](mailto:leerosenthal@frontiernet.net)> (2)



**12' Shellback Dinghy**, Joel White design, w/red sail, built '98 at Wooden Boat School, Brooklyn, ME. Asking \$3,000 obo w/trlr.  
CHAUNCY RUCKER, Mansfield Ctr., CT, (860) 423-7880 <[chauncy@crucker.com](mailto:chauncy@crucker.com)> (2)



**27' Atkin Schooner Stormalong**. Steel hull. Blt 1985. Diesel engine runs at 1qt/hr. Full set white sails (main, foresail, 2 genoas, storm jib) plus 3 tanbark sails that have never been used (mail, foresail, jib). Max headroom nearly 6', one dbl berth, dinette converts to single berth. No through-hull fittings except prop shaft (with PSS bearing) and electrolysis meter. No electronics. Battery used only for starting engine. 40 gals. water. Sink w/ small disposable sump. 5-gal. fuel built-in tank. 2 anchors. Dinghy. Asking \$14,500.  
BOB GERFY, Lopez Island, WA, (360) 468-4992. (2)

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Mail to *Boats*, 29 Burley St., Wenham, MA 01984, or e-mail to [officesupport@comcast.net](mailto:officesupport@comcast.net). No telephone ads please.



**30' Downeast Cruiser**, built '52 of best materials, copper riveted cedar over oak, always tight. 85hp Perkins Diesel (1,750hrs), 7.5kts @ 1.3gal/hr. Radar, aut pilot, VHF, Espar htr, gd inventory. A proper boat at a reasonable price. \$12,500.  
KARL BERARDI, Bedford, NH, (603) 785-1536. (2)



**30' Bolger Sharpie**, blt '60, vy sound, nice sails. \$3,500 obo.  
BOB JERMAINNE, Chester, CT, (860) 526-1119 (2)

**10' Vermont Packboat**, by Adirondack Guideboat, Inc. Weight 27lbs, beam 33.5", carrying capacity 275lbs. Hull material kevlar, cond exc, extras. \$850 obo.  
JAMES MIDDLETON, Randolph, VT, (802) 728-4097 (1P)



**18' Chris Craft Sea Skiff**, '58, 95hp Model K rblt '93, 100hrs. Custom seat cushions, Sunbrella convertible top, side/aft curtains. Teak swim platform/ladder. Brightwork refinished, hull & bottom painted '04. Bottom partially refastened. Loadright trlr. \$9,000. Pictures available.  
SAM WEBSTER, Detroit, MI, (313) 590-0945, <[ChrisCraftSkiff@aol.com](mailto:ChrisCraftSkiff@aol.com)> (2)

**Pete Culler's Good Little Skiff**, LOA 13', for sail & oar. Top condition.  
STUART WIER, Boulder, CO (303) 499-0991 (1)



**14' Camp Cruising Dory**, new professionally built by Butler Boats. Marine ply & epoxy w/graphite bottom & twin skegs. Stoutly built for pulling up on beach. New Honda 9.9 in motor well. Balanced lugsail & 10' sculling oar. Beautiful curved cabin house (no more wet tent) w/Beckson ports for ventilation & gold tone Lexan™ on hatch for light. Incl new Easy Load galv trlr. Boat w/sail rig \$8,620. Honda \$2,100. Galv trlr \$1,040.  
KEN CASADY, Port Angeles, WA, (253) 241-1305 (2)

**Klepper Aerius II**, '87. Full sail kit w/jib. Gd cond. \$1,500.  
MITCH or MARTHA SIBLEY-JETT, Ashford, CT, (860) 429-1595 (2)

**16' Cedar/Canvas Canoe**, Canadian hand built '65. Exc cond, orig paint, revarnished gunwales, double stems, lap jointed planking, rawhide seats. \$2,500. Located eastern PA.  
ALAN CORNEY, Morristown, NJ, (973) 656-0392, (570) 589-9531 (1)

**Bart Hawthaway Solo Canoes**, 30lb Rushton & 21lb Pack, both in exc cond. Ad w/pictures can be seen in *Boats*. Compl w/paddles & home made sail rig. \$650 ea.  
TONY FIORE, Palm Coast (central) FL, (386) 446-5519, <[aaafiore@hotmail.com](mailto:aaafiore@hotmail.com)> (2)

**18'6" Bolger Hawkeye**, light work/play boat featured in Bolger's book *Boats with an Open Mind*. Built '03 of marine ply & West System™ epoxy, repainted this winter. 15+mph & 3/4gal/hr w/'03 4-stroke 25hp long shaft ob w/3yrs warranty. On '01 galvanized dual axle Magic Tilt trlr (2,500lb cap) Asking price \$4,250. Would sell boat and motor w/trlr. 17' Annapolis Wherry ltwt pulling boat built of ply/epoxy from CLC kit '02. Fixed seat, Shaw and Tenney spoon bladed oars. Asking price \$1,250.  
PAUL TAYLOR, KeyLargo, FL, (305) 453-3752 (lve message), <[malish@juno.com](mailto:malish@juno.com)> (2)

**Nimble 20 Canoe Yawl**, tropical version. Dark green hull w/buff topsides. All bronze fittings. Teak trim, incl companionway doors & interior. Tanbark sails in exc cond. Johnson 6hp Sailmaster ob. Galv trlr w/new axle, new wheels & 750x14 tires, spare wheel. Compass, 13lb Danforth w/150; rode, docklines, fenders & misc. 9' Watertender, West Marine dinghy, freshwater boat in vy gd cond.  
TERRY HEINZ, 11963 Argenta Rd., Argenta, IL 62501, (217) 795-2348 (2)

**24' Winslow Cutter**, traditional wooden boat, Ralph E.. Winslow design. Fixer-upper in need of TLC. \$950.  
PHIL LEGARE, Tiverton, RI, (401) 625-5223, <[pjlegare@netscape.com](mailto:pjlegare@netscape.com)> (2)

**17' Herreshoff Kayak**, \$225.  
ROBERT O'NEILL, Brick, NJ, (732) 477-1107 (1P)





**11'1" Sand Dollar**, flat bottom rowboat built to plans by Arch Davis. A very pretty, practical little boat that is a pleasure to row. Built winter 2004. 6mm okoume plywood w/Cetol finished interior & white painted sides. Not rigged for sail. \$750. L. DOW, Eliot, ME, (207) 439-8488 (1)



**Bolger Light Scooner**, 23-1/2', marine ply/epoxy/bronze. Green & cream. See *MAIB* 2/1/04, Bolger's *Thirty Odd Boats*, <http://www.ace.net.au/schooner-build.htm#start> (Tim Fatchen & the *Flying Tadpole* in Australia). Like new cond, used less than 100hrs (crew grew up, moved away). All equip. Trlr, bearing buddies. Motors avail. \$3,800 inv, come see & make offer. DAVID BOLGIANO, Have de Grace, MD, (410) 272-6858 (1)

**16' Canadian Cedar/Canvas Canoe**, '65. Exc cond, orig red paint, varnished gunwales, orig paddles. Exceeds Old Town standards. Dbl stems, lap joint planking, rawhide seats. \$2,500 obo. Located eastern PA. ALAN CORNEY, Morristown, NJ, (973) 656-0392, (570) 689-9531 (2)



**Classic Looking Yacht**, gaff rigged trimaran, all wood/epoxy, teak, wheel steering. 31' loa (long bowsprit). Over \$5,000 invested, unfinished. Sell for \$2,500 incl trlr, new sails. Pics up on [www.taimui.org](http://www.taimui.org). Located nr Wellsville, OH on State Rt. 39 in Highlandtown. R. STEWART, Wellsville, OH, <ula@taimui.org> (1)

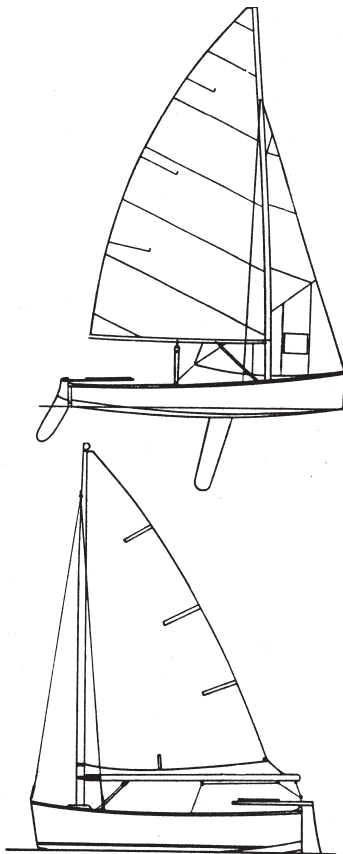
**2 Alden Sea Shell Single Shells**, each w/Oarmaster rigger & 14' Alden Feather oars. Ready to row. \$800 each. RICHARD F. WEEKS, RR1 Box 6940, Sedgwick ME, (207) 359-8457 (1)

**15' Meyers Seacycle**, '03 in as new cond. Has 2 pedal drives w/12" props. Incl seat cushions, folding basket, spare parts & platform to mount on boat trlr for easy launching. Anywhere new cost around \$2,700. Sacrifice \$1,900. Will consider Alden or other ocean rowing shell in partial trade. Delivery negotiable. DON CURRY, Harpswell, ME, (207) 725-6914, <captdonald@hotmail.com> (1)

**12'4" O'Day Widgeon**, \$400 boat only. Trlr negotiable. DAVID A. SOLTESZ, 113 E. Franklin Ave., Edgewater Park, NJ 08010, (609) 351-2312, <soulinvictus@comcast.net> (1)



**30' SISU Downeaster**, Royal Lowell Design, '80 hull w/4-53 Detroit Diesel engine. completely overhauled less than 500 hours ago. Fuel injected 140hp drives hull at max of 10-11kts, cruises comfortably at 8-9kts at 2-3 gals/hr. Two 80gal diesel tanks w/level indicators, 4 deep cycle batteries and 60a alternator. Electronics incl are: Ratheon Radar, Garmin GPS. Ratheon Sounder, and a VHF. Simple open flying bridge, cargo boom, & extended pilot house. Accommodations are extra large Olympic V-berth down below & small galley. 15gal fresh water system w/foot pump. Nice manual anchor windlass on the bow. 16' mast & cargo hoist. Deck light & all antennas mounted on the mast. 4-bladed prop & spare on 1-3/8" stainless shaft. All commercial grade equipment. Transmission is Borg Warner 1.91:1 hydraulic gearbox. Engine has commercial electric fuel pump & Racor water removal filter system. Hull is now produced by Eastern Boats. A classic Downeast sea boat & fine coastal cruising boat. Asking price is \$30K. Pictures may be seen on a web page at: <http://mysite.verizon.net/vze8686p/> JOHN BEIRNE, 108 Little Neck Rd., Ipswich, MA 01938, (978) 356-7485, Pager (888) 201-9323 (1)



**Wooden Sailboats**, take your pick. 14' '48 Rhodes Bantam #192, restored '02, see *WoodenBoat* #173 "Re-Launchings." New sails, cover, trlr. \$1950. Or, if you prefer something smaller, Bantam's smaller sibling 12' Penguin, also restored. w/trlr. \$750. Both boats available w/trlr. Could deliver New England, metro NYC, Philadelphia. Must sell 1 to make room for next restoration (Woodpussy). JEFF HILLIER, 3 Glendale Rd., No. Hampton, NH 03862 <jfhillier@aol.com> (1)

**20' Simmons Sea Skiff**, 50hp Honda, varnished mahogany decks, hull like new. Exc cond throughout. New trlr. \$10,000. ALEX HADDEN, Hadden Boat Co., Georgetown, ME, (207) 371-2662 (2)

**15' Grumman Canoe**, lt wt, painted by Grumman, red. \$350. CARL BELLING, 1909 N. Bay Dr., Warsaw, IN 46580, (574) 268-1990 (2)

3 Boats for Sale, beautifully crafted. well designed: 17' Outer Island Sea Kayak, designed by Jay Bubina (cedar strip). \$1,700. 15' Decked Sailing Canoe, MacGregor, designed by Ian Oughtred (cedar strip, hollow masts, sails, etc). \$2,250. 12' Sailing Canoe, Wee Rob (Oughtred, lapstrake marine ply). \$950. RICH PRAGER, Philadelphia, PA, (215) 922-5453. (1)

## BOATS WANTED

**2 Wooden Polynesian Canoe Hulls**, as donation for Taimui.org. Hawaiian koa type or other, about 20'-30' in gd cond. Must be wood dugouts. For use in building a double sailing canoe for future instructional purposes in teaching individuals on sailing techniques associated with indigenous Polynesian canoes. Will also consider accepting these in even trade for the 31' gaff-rigged boat for sale in this issue. R. STEWART, Wellsville, OH, [rus@taimui.org](mailto:rus@taimui.org) (1)

**Traditional (looking) Boats**, nr Baltimore/Annapolis MD. Not-for-profit 501c3 in Chesapeake runs maritime living history programs (ca Rev War/Civil War) w/4 boats 42' LOD to 14'. Suitable 5th boat sought as donation for tax credit. Whitehall, lapstrake, wineglass, etc. Ideal would be open glued plywood lapstrake 18' to 26' but we are adaptable. MICHAEL BOSWORTH, Vienna, VA (703) 864-4174, <michael.bosworth@verizon.net> (2)

## SAILS & RIGGING FOR SALE

**Dacron Sail**, 18'4"x9'4" made by sailmaker Lincoln H. Foster. \$50. CARL BELLING, 1909 N. Bay Dr., Warsaw, IN 46580, (574) 268-1990 (2)

## GEAR FOR SALE

**Outriggers**, Chesapeake Light Craft design, for canoe or kayak. \$75. CARL BELLING, 1909 N. Bay Dr., Warsaw, IN 46580, (574) 268-1990 (2)

**Marine Engine Sale**: Perkins 6354 6cyl Diesel, compl w/1.5:1 Borg Warner reverse gear, fresh water cooling. Runs grt, put in & run as is. Too heavy for my little boat. \$2,000. Buick OMC 225 V-6 I/O Engine, w/mounts. Run but has cracked manifold. \$500 obo. ALEX HADDEN, Hadden Boat Co., Georgetown, ME, (207) 371-2662 (2)



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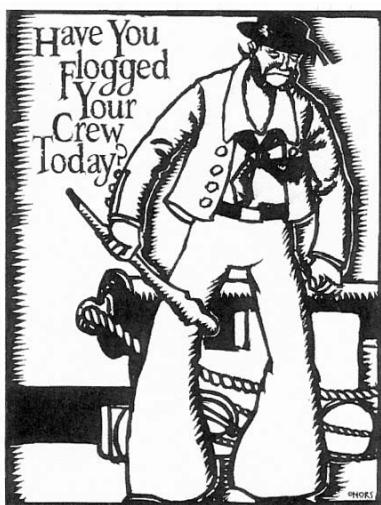
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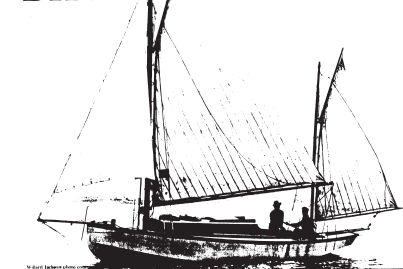
**Robb White & Sons Sport Boat**, handy, pretty, proven 16' x 43" strip planked skiff. Will plane with 2 adults with 4hp. Full sized mold patterns, complete instructions. \$75. SASE for photos & specs.

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JOHN NICHOLSON YACHT DESIGN LLC, Alexandria, VA, (703) 946-4635 <http://www.jnicholson.net> (13P)



**Nutmeg (aka \$200 Sailboat)**, Bolger design, 15'6"x4'6". Plans w/compl directions. \$20.

DAVE CARNELL, 322 Pages Creek Dr., Wilmington, NC 28411, <[davecarnell@ec.rr.com](mailto:davecarnell@ec.rr.com)>

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**For Sale: Lake Erie Summer Cottage**, at Snow's Marina, 207 Dennis Rd., Irving, NY on Cattaraugus Creek at mouth of Lake Erie (near Silver Creek, NY). Just steps from your boat & fishing from this cottage w/3br, screened family room, ceramic tile floor, knotty pine cupboards, premium air tight wood stove & rear deck. Peaceful, family oriented atmosphere. Asking \$10,000, open to offers. Must sell.

MARTY KOWAL, Hamburg, NY, (716) 627-2805 (1)

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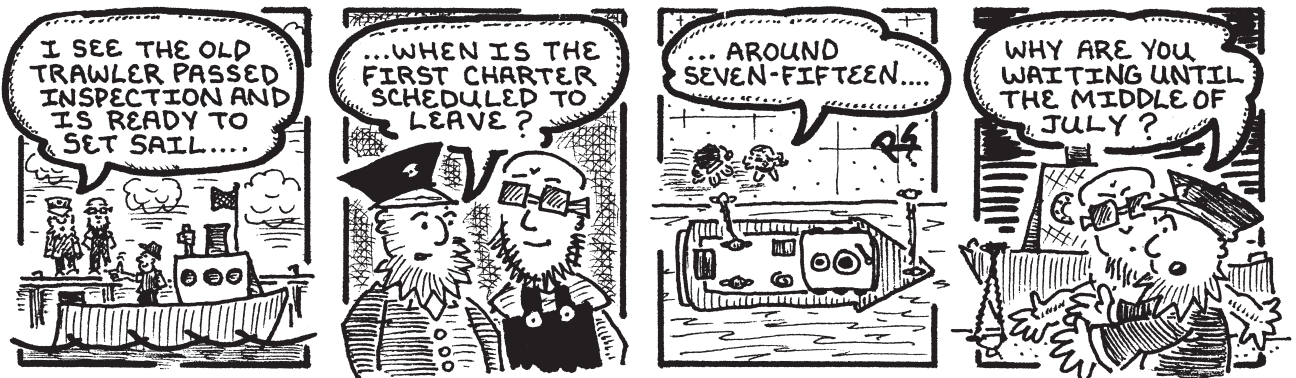




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Paul Neil, the man at the oars, has won his class in the Blackburn eight times in a row....something never done by any other competitor in any boat.

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May 28-30 Woodstock Craftshow, New Paltz, NY  
June 18-20 No Octane Regatta, Blue Mtn Lake, NY  
June 19-20 Clearwater Festival, Croton, NY  
July 16-7 Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, VT  
July 29-31 Stowe Arts Festival, Stowe, VT  
July 30-1 Antique & Classic, Skaneateles, NY  
Aug 5-7 Champlain Valley Folk Festival, Ferrisburg, VT  
Aug 5-7 Hildene Crafts Festival, Manchester, VT  
Aug 5-7 Antique & Classic Clayton NY  
Aug 12-4 Art & Crafts Festival, Lake Placid, NY  
Aug 12-4 Maine Boats & Harbors, Rockland ME  
Aug 19-21 Adirondack Living, Lake George, NY  
Sep 9-11 Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival, WA

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